

Residential Sprinklers supporting text amended 10/03/05

This text is intended to recognise recent developments in standards and sprinkler technology for residential and domestic use.

In addition to the new text above, there are a number of proposed amendments to the AD which will provide alternatives to existing provisions. For example, the potential to provide sprinkler protection instead of an alternative escape route where currently provided in both houses (typically 4 storeys and above) and multi-storey apartments. These new options will provide greater design freedoms and promote innovation and may, in some cases, produce a design cost saving compared to current alternatives. See Paragraphs 2.14, 3.15, 7.16, 12.16 and 16.5.

Residential sprinklers are also referred to in Approved Document B Volume 2 (Buildings other than dwellings).

Loft Conversions supporting text amended 10/03/05

The ODPM is minded to omit the current B1 guidance for loft conversions. This is because the suggested new guidance on fire doors (without self closers) and smoke alarms is considered to make it obsolete. Also, the current loft conversion guidance is the only situation whereby the Approved Document effectively acknowledges that occupants may have to wait to be rescued by means of a ladder, as opposed to the basic principal that you should generally be able to make your own escape, unassisted, from a fire. We would therefore particularly welcome stakeholders' views on this proposal, especially in relation to the effect this may have on some existing domestic properties.

Door Closing Devices supporting text amended 10/03/05

The ODPM is minded to remove the need for self closing devices within dwellings. This is because they can present a hazard to children; they can interfere with the day-to-day convenience of the occupants and many of our stakeholders tell us they are often disabled soon after occupation. The fire safety benefits of closing doors, particularly at night, remain and it is proposed to reinforce this message through national and local Community Fire Safety programmes (see www.firekills.gov.uk) and other fire safety initiatives. We would therefore particularly welcome stakeholders' views on this particular proposal.

Tall Buildings supporting text amended 10/03/05

Provision of firefighting shafts

The ODPM is minded to amend the above guidance in relation to provision of fire fighting shafts and mains. The new text above, based on hose distances only, is a simplification of previous guidance. This performance based guidance is also a reflection on the conclusions of the ODPM report *Physiological Assessment of Firefighting, Search and Rescue in the Built Environment* which is freely available on the internet at www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_fire/documents/downloadable/odpm_fire_033349.pdf. We would particularly welcome stakeholders' views on the impacts, particularly the costs and benefits, of this suggested amendment.

Discounting of stairs

The ODPM is minded to add the above new text to paragraph 3.21. This extra text would mean that a stair will need to be discounted in high rise phased evacuation buildings regardless of the level of protection to the stair. This is intended to allow for the problems associated with persons escaping from such a building becoming obstructed by firefighters entering the building. In most cases however this will result in a widening of stairs rather than the provision of an additional one.

This is considered to be a proactive measure. While there have been no incidents of this type in the UK if there were to be one the impacts could be disproportionately large (eg the World Trade Centre incident). We would therefore particularly welcome stakeholders views on the impacts, particularly the costs and benefits, of this suggested amendment.