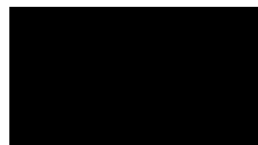


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Mr C Stokes



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■ J Wray
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Kensington & Chelsea TMO
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27th September 2010

Dear ■ Wray

After our meeting on Friday 24th September 2010 at The Hub 300, Kensal Road North Kensington I would like to put in writing the management procedures, topics and issues etc we discussed, so that when completing any fire risk assessments for residential buildings under the control of The Tenants Management Organisation (TMO) of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea in future these standards and observations will apply.

The following items and issue are the basis of this letter.

Employee fire training

Fire and emergency information for residents

Routine in- house fire safety inspections and safety checks for residential buildings

The evacuation strategy for residential buildings

Personnel Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEP's)

Lift Maintenance Servicing and Testing Policy in TMO residential buildings

Planned, preventive servicing and maintenance of fixed installations in residential buildings

Fire safety signage in residential buildings

Contractors procedures and policies including "hot working" and "lone working"

Employee Fire Training

All new employees of the TMO receive induction training with fire safety information provided as part of this induction training package, from the documents seen the following fire related areas are covered:

1. The fire risks in premises
2. The fire safety measures applicable to that building
3. The actions to be taken in the event of a fire
4. The actions on hearing the fire alarm warning signal
5. The method of operating the fire alarm system

6. The location of fire extinguishers
7. The means for summoning the fire & rescue service

Regular refresher health and safety training which includes fire training is given to TMO employees on an annual basis, this training is organized by the TMO Human Resources (HR) department based at The Hub 300 Kensal Road. The employees training records and dates of training given is stored with the HR department, the management and recording is maintained by the TMO asset management system, the last training session was completed earlier this month. The caretakers, wardens of buildings and office managers receive additional training so they can act as fire wardens/marshals, this training is reviewed and up dated on an annual basis and the training given by an external contractor. Again the HR department manages and records this training. As discussed the work force of the TMO is multi cultural and English might not be the first language of some of the employees or in fact the residents of the accommodation units. When training is given it is ensured that the employees comprehend the information given to them by the use of question and answer sessions at the end of the training. By being trained as a fire warden they are also the nominated persons and by being recorded as a fire warden you are also the nominated person with training records again kept by the HR department. The topics and areas covered by the training packages are available from either TMO's HR or the Health and Safety team or direct from the training provider. I have been shown copies of the training documents and they appear to cover all the areas and topics that are mentioned in the H M Government risk assessment guidance booklets. The practical training involves using the types of portable fire fighting appliances currently provided in the TMO buildings.

Fire and Emergency Information for Residents

Prior to moving into their flat all residents are issued with a handbook which includes appropriate fire safety advice and information in accordance with the advice in the H M Government "sleeping risk" guide section 7.2. The residents are given a tour of the building by a Housing Officer, the resident does not sign for the hand book or to say that they have received this information but it is part and parcel of the residents moving in programme. As part of TMOs on going policy to keep residents informed on all emergency and safety issues articles and information is regularly published about fire safety advice and emergency procedures in the "Link" magazine. Also all residents receive via letters and briefing sheets "what to do in the event of an emergency" and reminding them that they must not store items in communal areas nor cause obstructions to the means of escape routes. These articles have been produced in the 7 major languages which have been selected as being most likely to meet the needs of most residents. The Fire and Rescue service can be called at any time by any resident if there is an emergency situation.

Routine in- house Fire Safety Inspections and Safety Checks for Residential Buildings

The caretakers and building wardens regularly walk the building and on a monthly basis record their findings, but if there are any defects noticed any time there are reported. A defect reporting policies and procedures in place so that any discrepancies or damage can be repaired or items replaced. Please see Appendix A for the "Caretakers Checklist".

The Evacuation Strategy for Residential Buildings

In residential accommodation buildings there is a “defend in place” evacuation strategy for the residents, this means the residents remain within their own dwelling during a fire incident unless the fire is in their dwelling or it is otherwise affected, in which case they immediately evacuate the flat and call the Fire and Rescue Service. The Fire Service or TMO employees can or will arrange for a general evacuation of the building at anytime if this is appropriate or resident can leave at anytime if they so wish. This information is provided to the residents by TMO in a number of different formats, newsletters, the Link magazine or at residents meetings. The rationale for a “defend in place” strategy comes from the following statement in The Building Regulations 2000, Section 1 of B1, Means of Escape from Flats, of Approved Document B Fire Safety (Volume 2) Incorporating Insurers Requirements for Property Protection.

2.3 The provisions for means of escape for flats are based on the assumption that:

- a. the fire is generally in a flat;*
- b. there is no reliance on external rescue (e.g. by a portable ladder);*
- c. measures in Section 8 (B3) provide a high degree of compartmentation and therefore a low probability of fire spread beyond the flat of origin, so that simultaneous evacuation of the building is unlikely to be necessary; and*
- d. although fires may occur in the common parts of the building, the materials and construction used there should prevent the fabric from being involved beyond the immediate vicinity (although in some cases communal facilities exist which require additional measures to be taken).*

Personnel Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEP's)

The suite of Personnel Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEP's) documents you showed me are the ones used as best practice in the H M Government guidance documents for risk assessment. So by using these documents you are following the guidance in the Government risk assessment guides and therefore best practice. You explained that the residents news letter carry's articles asking any resident to contact TMO if they are experiencing any mobility or sensory problems.

TMO have recently introduced a comprehensive programme to gathering information about residents including any disabilities and their physical ability and mobility to respond to any emergency situations. This information will be imputed on a “TP Tracker system” and held centrally.

The additional information will be used to assess if residents may require additional devices to provide them with early warning of smoke/fire in their home and/or development of a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEPs).

Lift Maintenance Servicing and Testing Policy in TMO Residential Buildings

The following information relates to fire fighting and evacuation lifts in TMO residential buildings, over 18 meters in height: (copied of an e mail from Mrs Wray)

1. Minimum car size (1100mm wide x 1400mm deep) for 8 persons capacity (630kg).
2. Dedicated power supply serving lift (3 phase). Additionally, ancillary items such as lift alarm, lighting etc. are also served by their own dedicated power supply

3. 2-way communication on new lifts includes connection to Customer Service Centre / out of hours monitoring service when the lift alarm is activated
4. Firemans Control Switch fitted. When operated this causes the lift to return to ground floor and open to allow the fire fighters access. It stops landing calls being registered and allows the authorised person e.g. LFB operative to take control of the lift (by applying a constant pressure on any call button).
5. Lift car and landing doors are composed of stainless steel than is not less than 16SWG thick and over 2 hours fire resistance
6. Annual comprehensive servicing and maintenance contract is in place for all lifts. This includes monthly inspections.
7. TMO employ's a dedicated Lift Engineer who is responsible for the supervision and monitoring of the contract / contractors.
8. The Council's Insurers, [REDACTED] carry out 6-monthly inspections which include a full safety check.
9. Estate staff (caretakers, porters, inspectors) and Neighbourhood Officers carry out regular estate inspections which include visual inspection of the lift car and testing of the lift alarm.

From the information above the lifts where fitted in residential building would also be suitable to be used by disabled persons as a means of evacuating the premises and the TMO asset register/system holds all the premises address, servicing dates of the lifts etc. For buildings under 18 meters in height there is no requirement under the Building Regulations to provide fire fighting or evacuation lifts, so where lifts are installed in these buildings they are standard passenger lifts. In these buildings the criteria of the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) report on evacuation using lifts, called "*Lifts (elevators) – Study of the use of lifts for evacuation during an emergency*" will be used along with the Building Research Establishment/ Department for Communities and Local Government "*Guidance on the emergency use of lifts or escalators for evacuation and fire and rescue service operations*"

This will enable the safe use of existing lifts in buildings to be used in the event of an emergency whether the type of emergency is fire, explosions and chemical or biological attacks. Lifts that are not evacuation or fire fighting lifts but on different electrical sub circuits can help persons with restricted mobility and other problems to evacuate buildings with relative ease and also significantly reduce general evacuation time. (Please see Appendix B for the locations of fire fighting and evacuation lifts in the medium risk assessment programme)

Planned, Preventive Servicing and Maintenance of Fixed Installations in Residential Buildings

In Appendix B there is a list of all the buildings covered by the medium risk, fire risk assessments programme and this list contains all the fixed installations within these buildings. It has been confirmed with TMO that all the fixtures and fittings indicated on this list in these buildings are on a maintenance and servicing contract. A check will be undertaken as each building is visited to verify the accuracy of the list and any additions or subtractions will be made and the TMO person responsible informed so that corrections to contracts etc can be made. For the purpose of the fire risk assessments for the buildings on the list in Appendix B it is taken that if the item is on the list, ie emergency lighting in Anytown House then servicing and maintenance is being undertaken and records kept.

Fire Safety Signage in Residential Accommodation

If any fire signage is displayed in any of the residential buildings it is in accordance with the following:

Exit signs

Fire exit signage is not displayed in a single staircase building as this is the only route therefore the main or "ordinary route" as described in the Building Regulations, and people are familiar with the layout. This comment would also apply to workers in the building because The Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals 1996) document states "People usually leave premises by the same way that they enter or by routes which are familiar to them" and there is only one route.

If in a single staircase building there is an alternative ground floor level final exit which is not obvious then this alternative exit has signs displayed and the route to it, but not the main entrance door.

Where there are multiple staircases and alternative routes that could be utilised these are indicated by exit signage through the entire length of the route.

Fire door signs

Self closing fire doors have "fire door keep shut" signs displayed unless they are:

- a. doors to and within flats;
- b. bedroom doors in 'Other-residential' premises; and
- c. lift entrance/landing doors.

Fire doors to cupboards, stores and boiler rooms etc that opening onto the escape route have "Fire door keep locked shut" signs displayed and any fire exit door have "Fire Exit – Keep Clear" signs displayed if there is a likelihood of them becoming obstructed.

Fire Notices

Fire action notices are not displayed in the residential buildings because TMO supplies information to the residents in a variety of different ways, newsletters, residents meetings and articles in the Link magazine etc.

Contractors Procedures and Policies including "hot working" and "lone working"

TMO has policies and procedures for contractors or in house employees carrying out work in the residential buildings, including any "hot work" or other permit work type activities. Before any work commences the authorised contractors have to provide method statements and schedules of work etc and according to the TMO policies contractors or employees are advised on procedures to undertake when lone working takes place. All the policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and are updated with any new or relevant information if appropriate.

Please feel free to contact me if you require any further assistance,

Yours Sincerely

Carl Stokes

Appendix A

Further to our recent meeting on this issue here is the list of items that need to be included in the caretakers inspection checklist –

1. Are there no combustible items or waste outside the building to prevent arson.
2. Does the closing device on the main entrance door fully shut the door thus stopping non residents entering the building.
3. Does the lock on the main entrance door work correctly.
4. Do any other Final Exit doors open and close fully – a check must be undertaken to check the operation of the door and that it closes fully.
5. Do the securing devices on the other Final Exit doors work correctly.
6. Whilst walking around the building check the floor covering is it in a good condition, is there any damage to it especially on stairs. Any defects need to be reported and pay particular attention to any areas that could be affected by inclement weather.
7. Whilst walking around the building check the wall & ceiling linings, these must be inspected regularly for any defects – particularly following any repair works – which must all be made good to a fire-resisting standard i.e. should not leave any gaps or holes in ceilings or walls as these could allow smoke to pass through.
8. Whilst walking around the building check if any residents have replaced their flat entrance doors, this could be with UVPC ones that are not fire rated, if there are any changes please report this.
9. Whilst walking around the building check if any residents have installed gates or other security devices over their flat entrance doors this could obstruct the fire service if they had to gain entry to the dwelling. If there are any such added security features please report this.
10. Are there no obstructions or storage in the entrance lobby area, this could include push chairs, bikes etc.
11. Are there no obstructions or storage in the corridors, stairwells, refuse chute rooms, or other communal spaces like clubrooms etc.
12. Check for any evidence of smoking in the common parts of the building.
13. If there are any fire doors in corridors etc check they are not damaged, they operate correctly, fully self-close, do not binding on floor, the hinges are intact and if fitted the intumescent strips and cold smoke seal are not damaged.
14. If there are any, check that the fire doors of the refuse chute rooms, store rooms are not damaged, they operate correctly, fully self-close or are locked shut, do

not binding on floor, the hinges are intact and if fitted the intumescent strips and cold smoke seal are not damaged.

15. Check any lift motor rooms or electrical cupboards/rooms to see that any contractors have removed all building materials or waste, report any finds of such items so that they can be removed.
16. If any Emergency lighting is fitted – monthly checks & written record of testing needs to be maintained and any defects reported.
17. If any portable firefighting equipment is in the building – monthly check & written record of inspection for any damage needs to be maintained and any defects reported.
18. Fire Exit Signage – where this is displayed, particularly above alternative final exit doors etc, this needs to be in place, not obscured or damaged or vandalised in any way.
19. Fire Signage on door – where door operating signage on alternative exit doors is needed (ie push bar to open sign) is it displayed, not obscured or damaged or vandalised in any way.
20. If fitted are the wet / dry riser cabinets in a good condition – FB-approved locks in place no vandalism / defects / outstanding repairs etc.
21. If sprinklers are fitted anywhere are they in a good condition, can the sprinkler valves be accessed– no vandalism / defects / outstanding repairs etc.
22. Visually check any detection / extraction / ventilation systems in the common parts for vandalism / defects / outstanding repairs etc.

Appendix B

List of all of all the buildings covered by the medium risk, fire risk assessments programme with their fixed installations on a maintenance and servicing contract.