



Department of the Environment
and
The Welsh Office

The Building Regulations 1985

**Mandatory rules for
means of escape
in case of fire**

Her Majesty's Stationery Office
1985

Mandatory rules for means of escape in case of fire

Conformity with the rules contained in this document is **mandatory** whenever paragraph B1 applies. There is no other way of complying with that paragraph.

However, if in any particular instance the Requirements seem to be particularly demanding, the local authority may be asked to relax them. If the local authority refuses to grant a relaxation there is a right of appeal to the Secretary of State.

The requirement of paragraph B1 in PART B of Schedule 1 to the Building Regulations 1985 is as follows:

Requirement

Limits on application

PART B FIRE

B1 Means of escape

(1) There shall be means of escape in case of fire from the building to a place of safety outside the building capable of being safely and effectively used at all material times.

(2) This requirement may be met only by complying with the relevant requirements of the publication entitled 'The Building Regulations 1985-Mandatory rules for means of escape in case of fire' published by HMSO (1985 edition).

1 This requirement applies only to:

(a) a building which is erected and which –

- (i) is or contains a dwellinghouse of three or more storeys,
- (ii) contains a flat and is of three or more storeys,
- (iii) is or contains an office, or
- (iv) is or contains a shop;

(b) a dwellinghouse which is extended or materially altered and will have three or more storeys, and

(c) a building of three or more storeys, the use of which is materially changed to use as a dwellinghouse.

2 The means of escape provided need only, in the case of a dwellinghouse or a building containing a flat, afford escape for people from the third storey and above and, in the case of a building containing an office or a shop, afford escape for people from the office or shop.

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Introduction

Means of escape is the structural means whereby a safe route is provided for persons to travel from any point in a building to a place of safety without outside assistance.

This document deals with provisions for means of escape in certain new buildings, and for material alteration and material change of use to dwellinghouses.

The provisions are set out in **Sections 1 to 4** of this document.

The references in this document to **British Standards** are to the versions of those standards (with amendments, if any) current at the date of publication of this document.

Some of the terms used in this document have a special meaning. Terms which are used throughout the document are defined in **Appendix A**. Other terms which are used only in **Appendix B** are defined there.

Section 1

Dwellinghouses

1.1 This section applies to a dwellinghouse of three or more storeys which is:

- (a) being erected, or
- (b) being extended or materially altered, if after the work has been carried out it will have three or more storeys,

and to a building of three or more storeys the use of which is to be materially changed to use as a dwellinghouse.

1.2 The dwellinghouse shall be constructed in accordance with the recommendations in the relevant clauses of **British Standard 5588 Fire precautions in the design and construction of buildings, Section 1.1 : 1984 Code of practice for single family dwellinghouses.**

1.3 The relevant clauses of that standard are:

- 2 Definitions
- 4 Planning in relation to fire
- 5 Means of escape and provisions for rescue, **except 5.2** (which deals with houses not having a floor exceeding 4.5m above ground level - ie houses of one or two storeys)
- 6 Construction
- 7.3 Ducted warm air heating systems.

1.4 Where one new storey containing one or two habitable rooms is added in the roof space of an existing dwellinghouse of two storeys, the work described in Appendix B may be carried out in substitution for that required by paragraph 1.3 above.

Section 2

Flats

2.1 This section applies to a building of three or more storeys which is being erected and which contains a flat on the third storey or above.

2.2 The building is to be constructed in accordance with the recommendations of the relevant clauses of **British Standard Code of Practice CP3 Code of basic data for the design of buildings, Chapter IV Precautions against fire, Part 1 : 1971 Flats and maisonettes (in blocks over two storeys).**

2.3 The relevant clauses of that standard are:

- 1.2 Definitions
- 3 Planning: recommendations
- 4.2 Fire protection
- 4.3 Fire-resisting doors
- 4.4 Stairway enclosure: stairway protection lobbies
- 5 Ancillary accommodation, **except 5.6** (which deals with fuel storage)
- 6 Engineering services
- Appendix A (Figures)

Section 3**Shops**

3.1 This section applies to a building which is or contains a shop.

3.2 The building is to be constructed in accordance with the recommendations of the relevant sections of **British Standard 5588** *Fire precautions in the design and construction of buildings, Part 2 : 1985 Code of practice for shops*.

3.3 The relevant sections of that standard are:

- 1 General, **except** clause 1 (which deals with scope) and clause 3 (which deals with use of the code)
- 2 Analysis of the problem
- 3 Planning of escape from public areas
- 4 Construction and fire safety signs and notices
- 5 Engineering services (other than fire protection facilities) and ancillary accommodation, **except** 13.1 (which deals with electrical installations), 14.1 to 14.4 (which deal with general lighting) and 23 (which deals with data processing areas).

Section 4**Offices**

4.1 This section applies to a building which is or contains an office.

4.2 The building is to be constructed in accordance with the recommendations of the relevant sections of **British Standard 5588** *Fire precautions in the design and construction of buildings, Part 3 : 1983 Code of practice for office buildings*.

4.3 The relevant sections of that standard are:

- 1 General, **except** clauses 1 (which deals with scope) and 3 (which deals with use of the code)
- 2 Analysis of the problem
- 3 Planning of escape from office areas
- 4 Construction and fire safety signs and notices
- 5 Engineering services (other than fire protection facilities) and ancillary accommodation, **except** 12.1 (which deals with electrical installations) 13.1 to 13.4 (which deal with general lighting) and 22 (which deals with data processing areas).

Appendix A

Definitions

In this document, unless the contrary intention appears, words in the singular include the plural and words in the plural include the singular.

A.1 Basement A storey of which the floor is at any point more than 1.2 metres below the finished surface of the ground adjacent to it. A basement is not to be regarded as a storey when counting the number of storeys.

A.2 Dwellinghouse does not include a flat or a building containing a flat.

A.3 Flat Separate and self-contained premises constructed or adapted for use for residential purposes and forming part of a building from some other part of which it is divided horizontally.

A.4 Material alteration has the meaning given in regulation 3 (2) of the principal regulations.

A.5 Material change of use has the meaning given in regulation 5 of the principal regulations.

A.6 Office includes premises used for the purposes of administration, clerical work (including writing, book keeping, sorting papers, filing, typing, duplicating, machine calculating, drawing and the editorial preparation of matter for publication), handling money or telephone and telegraph operating.

A.7 Shop Premises used for the carrying on of a retail trade or business (including the sale to members of the public of food or drink for immediate consumption, retail sales by auction, the business of lending books or periodicals for the purposes of gain, and the business of a barber or hairdresser), and premises to which members of the public are invited to resort for the purposes of delivering these goods for repair or other treatment, or of themselves carrying out repairs to, or other treatment of goods.

In addition to the definitions given above there are other more specialised terms defined in **Appendix B**.

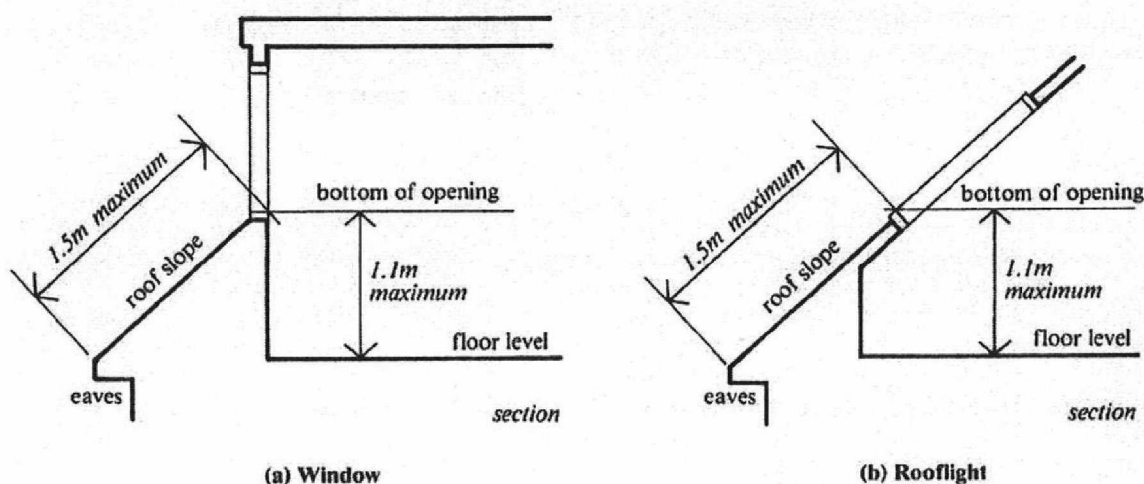
Loft conversions

ADDITION OF NEW STOREY IN LOFT SPACE

B.1 Where the new storey contains one or two habitable rooms:

- (a) existing doors in the first storey giving access to habitable rooms shall be fitted with self-closing devices;
- (b) existing doors in the ground storey shall be fitted with self-closing devices and, in the case of a new storey containing two habitable rooms, shall also be **fire-resisting***;
- (c) any glazing in doors shall be of wired glass;
- (d) where the stairway to the new storey rises over the existing stairway and within the same enclosure, the new room shall be separated from the stairway by a **fire-resisting*** self-closing door set in a **fire-resisting**** enclosure;
- (e) where the stairway to the new storey rises from the existing stairwell through an existing room, the stairway shall be separated from the room and the rest of the dwellinghouse by a **fire-resisting**** enclosure, and there shall be a **fire-resisting*** self-closing door at the top or bottom of the new stairway;
- (f) where the stairway to the new storey rises from within an existing bedroom, the bedroom shall be separated from the rest of the dwellinghouse by **fire-resisting**** construction, and there shall be a **fire-resisting*** self-closing door at the top of the new stairway set in a **fire-resisting**** enclosure; and
- (g) the room shall have a window or rooflight at least 850mm high and 500mm wide when open, positioned as shown in Figure 1 and located to allow access for rescue by ladder from the ground.

Figure 1 Position of window or rooflight



Appendix B

Loft conversions

DEFINITIONS

B.2 Fire resistance means the ability of a component or construction of a building to satisfy for a stated period of time some or all of the criteria specified in the appropriate part of BS 476, currently Part 8, namely stability, integrity, and insulation.

B.3 Habitable room means a room used, or intended to be used for dwelling purposes, including a kitchen, but not including a bathroom.

B.4 Self-closing in relation to any door includes closing by means of rising butt hinges.

B.5 Fire-resisting, in B.1 opposite, in respect of **doors** (identified*) is a minimum period of fire resistance of 20 minutes in respect of integrity, and in respect of **enclosures** (identified**) is a minimum period of fire resistance of 30 minutes in respect of stability, integrity, and insulation.

British Standards referred to

BS 5588 Fire precautions in the design and construction of buildings, Section 1.1 : 1984 Code of practice for single family dwellinghouses.

CP3 Code of basic data for the design of buildings, Chapter IV Precautions against fire, Part 1 : 1971 Flats and maisonettes (in blocks over two storeys).

Amendment slip number 1 : 1972 (AMD 851)

Amendment slip number 2 : 1973 (AMD 1077)

Amendment slip number 3 : 1976 (AMD 1889)

Amendment slip number 4 : 1978 (AMD 2708)

BS 5588 Fire precautions in the design and construction of buildings, Part 2 : 1985 Code of practice for shops.

BS 5588 Fire precautions in the design and construction of buildings, Part 3 : 1983 Code of practice for office buildings.

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