

## UPDATE ON INTERIM MITIGATION MEASURES REQUIRED PENDING REMEDiation OF CLADDING

This note supersedes Annex A to Melanie Dawes' letter of [22 June](#) on Safety Checks following the Grenfell Tower fire. This advice has been endorsed by the National Fire Chiefs Council, who will be circulating it separately to fire and rescue services.

### **Advice**

This advice relates to circumstances in which it has been confirmed that the core ("filler") within Aluminium Composite Material (ACM)<sup>1</sup> in conjunction with other elements of the cladding system on your building, does not meet relevant requirements of the Building Regulations guidance. In these circumstances, it is essential that you **immediately** implement the following interim mitigating measures, if you have not previously done so, to address the fire hazard and so ensure the safety of residents, pending any remediation of the cladding system needed. Local fire and rescue services will continue to work with building owners to ensure necessary mitigation measures are in place.

In this connection, the relevant requirement of building regulations is that external walls shall adequately resist the spread of fire over the walls.

### **Interim measures recommended by independent panel of experts**

- If you have not already done so, you should inform your local fire and rescue service. Failure to do so may put fire-fighters as well as residents at risk. The fire and rescue service will carry out an urgent inspection with the 'responsible person' to ensure that they have identified and introduced appropriate interim measures, as set out below. The fire and rescue service will also carry out a further inspection once the interim measures have been completed.
- Check that a suitable and sufficient fire risk assessment has been carried out within the previous 12 months and that the recommendations within the action plan of the assessment have been completed; and also, confirm that there have been no material changes (to the building, the fire safety measures or the occupancy) that could, potentially, undermine the validity of the fire risk assessment. If no fire risk assessment has been carried out, or you consider that material changes have taken place, you must immediately arrange for a fire risk assessment to be carried out by a competent person (e.g. by a person

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<sup>1</sup> For the avoidance of doubt; the core (filler) within an Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) is an "insulation material/product", "insulation product", and/or "filler material" as referred to in Paragraph 12.7 ("Insulation Materials/Products") in Section 12 "Construction of external walls" of Approved Document B (Fire safety) Volume 2 Buildings other than dwelling houses. (The important point to note is that Paragraph 12.7 does not just apply to thermal insulation within the wall construction, but applies to any element of the cladding system, including, therefore, the core of the ACM.)

who is listed on a register of fire risk assessors operated by a professional body or certification body, or, preferably, by a company that is certificated by a third party certification body that is, itself, accredited by the United Kingdom Accreditation Service to operate the certification scheme). Guidance on choosing a competent assessor is available here <http://www.cfoa.org.uk/19532>.

- Engage with residents of the building to ensure that they fully understand the emergency fire procedures in the building. Ensure that fire procedure notices are updated, where necessary, and accurate. This is particularly important where a 'stay put' strategy is temporarily being changed to one of simultaneous evacuation, pending replacement of the cladding.
- All residents should be surveyed in respect of their ability to evacuate the building without assistance.
- Check there are no potential routes for fire spread from the interior of the building out onto the cladding system. This would include, for example, the presence and integrity of cavity barriers, and the risk of ignition to the external wall system via window surround and fitting details.
- Check that, at ground level, or on any balconies, there are no combustible materials (e.g. storage of refuse) in the vicinity of the cladding system. Ensure that there are measures to prevent combustible materials in such locations (e.g. by temporary barriers or instructions to residents). Instruct residents that they must not have any barbecue on any balcony.
- Close any car parks in which a vehicle fire could impinge on cladding.
- Check that all flat entrance doors, and doors that open onto escape corridors and stairways, are fire-resisting and effectively self-closing against any resistance of a latch (or, for example, in the case of plant rooms or cupboards, are kept locked shut.) For guidance on these doors, consult the Local Government Association guidance on fire safety in purpose-built blocks of flats – <https://www.local.gov.uk/fire-safety-purpose-built-flats>. In general, doors that were deemed to be fire-resisting at the time of construction of the block will be satisfactory. Replace any non-fire-resisting doors (such as non-fire-resisting PVCu doors) immediately with doorsets<sup>2</sup> that are third party certificated as providing at least 30 minutes' fire resistance.

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<sup>2</sup> A fully certified doorset is a complete unit consisting of door leaf/leaves, door frame and all other related component parts including hinges, glazing system, hardware [or ironmongery] including any locking systems, door furniture, decorative finishes, signage and door closer, together with associated intumescent strips and smoke seals as applicable. Side screens and fanlights form part of the certified unit.

- Check all walls that separate flats, plant and store rooms, etc. from escape routes to ensure there are no obvious routes for fire or smoke spread (e.g. holes where services, such as pipes and cables, pass through walls).
- Check that any smoke control systems, including associated fire detection systems, are operating correctly.
- Check all facilities provided for fire-fighters, including fire-fighting lifts and dry or wet rising mains. If you have ANY concerns you should contact your local fire and rescue service, who will, if they have not already done so, carry out an inspection to ensure functionality.
- Ensure that there is sufficient roadway access and hardstanding for firefighting vehicles attending incidents and are required to operate to fight any fire externally.
- Residents must be advised to ensure all smoke alarms are present and working in their flat; to report concerns about fire safety measures in the building (e.g. presence of combustible materials in escape routes) to their landlord and, understand the purpose and importance of any interim measures being taken.
- Co-operate with any commercial premises within the building to ensure they do not impose any significant risk

Once you have completed the above, the competent person can assess whether a 'stay put' strategy is still appropriate for your building, in discussion with the local fire and rescue service. The competent person will need to take into account a number of factors, including (but not necessarily limited to) the following:

- The fire and rescue service attendance time
- The general fire precautions in the building
- The height of the building
- Provision of sprinklers or other automatic fire suppression systems
- The number of flats
- The type of cladding system (i.e. Category 2 or 3 and type of insulation)
- The extent of the cladding system
- The number of means of escape stairways
- The proximity of the cladding system to windows or vents within common parts, particularly the stairway(s)
- Risk of external ignition of the cladding system (e.g. taking into account the height at which the cladding starts, proximity of cars etc. to the cladding)
- Risk of internal ignition of the cladding system (e.g. from fires inside the building via unprotected window reveals and the proximity of ignition sources such as domestic appliances).
- The collective effect of the fire safety measures considered holistically, as opposed to each measure in isolation.

This above assessment must be recorded so that it can be made available to the fire and rescue service. If the decision by the competent person is temporarily to change a stay-put strategy to one of simultaneous evacuation, then you must inform your local fire and rescue service so they can update their operational procedures.

**Where simultaneous evacuation is adopted**, it will need to be managed, should an evacuation be necessary in the event of a fire. This is likely to require the presence of a Waking Watch on a 24/7 basis. Even where a 'stay put' policy is to continue, a Waking Watch might still be appropriate. A simultaneous evacuation policy is also likely to necessitate some form of fire alarm system to alert residents of the need to evacuate, unless there are sufficient staff in the Waking Watch to detect fire and initiate an evacuation at an early stage of a fire in the building. Guidance on a Waking Watch and Common Fire Alarm systems has been produced by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) to assist building owners/responsible persons who need to adopt a temporary simultaneous evacuation strategy. This is available on the NFCC website at: <https://www.nationalfirechiefs.org.uk/Grenfell-Tower>.

The NFCC supports the Fire Safety in Purpose Built Blocks of Flats guidance hosted on the LGA website and developed by a wide range of stakeholders. The guidance remains appropriate for all purpose built blocks of flats. However, the unique circumstances following the Grenfell Tower fire mean that Section 19 in particular 'Stay put policy', and in particular paragraphs 19.6 and 19.7, should be considered in the context of this additional and complementary NFCC guidance.

In the case of the most serious risk, consideration must be given to moving some or all residents out of the block until satisfactory remedial work has been done. Consideration needs to be given to whether a decanting of residents should apply to the whole block or only to residents of the uppermost floors. Partial decanting in particular will require careful management of access.