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Press release

Independent review of building regulations and fire safety

The government has announced an independent review of building regulations and fire safety.

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From:

Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government
(<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-housing-communities-and-local-government>) and
The Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP (<https://www.gov.uk/government/people/sajid-javid>)



An independent review of building regulations and fire safety has been announced by the government today (28 July 2017).

This follows the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower, which raised serious questions about the fire safety of high rise residential buildings, and subsequent government testing of aluminium composite material (ACM) cladding from similar buildings across the country.

The first result from large scale tests (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fire-test-report-dclg-bs-8414-test-no1>) of building cladding systems has also been published today. These latest tests simulate a tall building and allow experts to understand better how different types of cladding panels behave with different types of insulation in a fire.

The first system tested, a wall cladding system using an aluminium composite material (ACM) cladding with unmodified polyethylene filler (Cat 3) and foam insulation, failed the test which is set out in current building regulations guidance.

Immediate action is already underway to ensure the safety of residents in these buildings. But the results also make clear that we need to understand how current building regulations and fire safety works in order to make them as effective as possible in the future.

This forward-looking independent review, to be led by Dame Judith Hackitt, Chair of EEF, the Manufacturers' Organisation, will look at current building regulations and fire safety with a particular focus on high rise residential buildings. It will report jointly to the Communities Secretary Sajid Javid and the Home Secretary Amber Rudd.

It will examine:

- the regulatory system around the design, construction and on-going management of buildings in relation to fire safety
- related compliance and enforcement issues
- international regulation and experience in this area

Communities Secretary Sajid Javid said:

Since the tragic Grenfell Tower disaster, the government has been working to make sure people living in high rise buildings are safe.

It's clear we need to urgently look at building regulations and fire safety. This independent review will ensure we can swiftly make any necessary improvements. Government is determined to make sure that we learn the lessons from the Grenfell Tower fire, and to ensure nothing like it can happen again.

As part of the review, Dame Judith will consult the Buildings Regulations Advisory Committee (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/building-regulations-advisory-committee>) – which advises the government on changes to building regulations– as well as the construction and housing industry, the fire sector, international experts, MPs and the public.

The review will also work closely with other government departments and the devolved administrations and consider the implications of changes to the regulatory system on other government objectives.

Review Chair, Dame Judith Hackitt said:

I am honoured to be asked by government to lead this important independent review. This review will look at building regulations and fire safety to see what changes can be made for the future to make these more effective.

I am keen to engage widely with industry and the public to inform the recommendations from the review. I want the recommendations to lead to any necessary improvements in the system being made.

Terms of reference for this independent review will be published in summer 2017, once the terms of reference for the Grenfell Tower Public Inquiry have been agreed.

It is expected that the review will present an interim report before the end of the year, and a final report no later than spring 2018. The government will act swiftly on any recommendations from this review to make sure people living in high rise buildings are safe.

Further information

The government also wrote yesterday to all local authorities and housing associations to outline funding arrangements. The government expects that building owners will fund measures designed to make a building fire safe, and will draw on their existing resources to do so.

We will work with relevant bodies so current restrictions on the use of their financial resources do not prevent them from making essential fire safety upgrades to buildings.

Short biography of Dame Judith Hackitt

Dame Judith was Chair of HSE from October 2007 to March 2016. She previously served as a health and safety Commissioner between 2002 and 2005. She was made a Dame in the 2016 New Year Honours for services to health and safety and engineering in particular for being a role model for young women. She was awarded a CBE in 2006.

In April 2016, she was appointed as Chair of EEF, The Manufacturers' Organisation in April 2016.

Dame Judith is a chemical engineer and graduated from Imperial College in 1975. She worked in the chemicals manufacturing industry for 23 years before joining the Chemical Industries Association (CIA) in 1998. She became Director General of CIA (from 2002-2005) and then worked in Brussels for the European Chemical Industry Association (CEFIC).

She was elected as a Fellow of the Royal Academy of Engineering in July 2010 and currently chairs the External Affairs Committee. Dame Judith is a Fellow of the Institution of Chemical Engineers and a member of council. She was President of IChemE from May 2013 to May 2014.

Dame Judith is also Chair of Semta - the Science, Engineering and Manufacturing Technologies Alliance, and a non-executive director of the High Value Manufacturing Catapult.

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