



LONDON FIRE BRIGADE

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Dany Cotton QFSM
London Fire Commissioner

London Fire Brigade is run by the London
Fire and Emergency Planning Authority

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To all housing providers in London

Following the fire at Grenfell Tower and the programme of checks announced by the Prime Minister last week, I'm writing to housing providers in London to remind you of your duty to ensure there is a comprehensive fire risk assessment for all purpose built blocks of flats and maisonettes that you own or manage. Checking and reviewing this is the single most helpful action you can do at this point to improve the safety of your residents.

This fire risk assessment needs to identify the general fire precautions required for the building. These are:

- Measures to reduce the risk of and spread of fire on the premises; e.g. fire resisting and self closing doors to flats
- A means of escape from the premises i.e. an escape route;
- Making sure that the escape route is clear and can be safely and effectively used at all times; e.g. fire resisting and self closing doors to corridors, lobbies and staircases; emergency lighting; fire exit signs; and smoke ventilation/control systems.
- Having the appropriate smoke detection and warning systems in case of fire;
- Having measures in place to fight fires on the premises e.g. such as dry rising mains;
- Having arrangements in place for action to be taken in the event of fire on the premises.

Your fire risk assessment should be carried out by a competent fire risk assessor and might identify additional measures that should be put in place, which you should then act upon.

You should also have an emergency evacuation plan for residents and ensure they know the actions they need to take in the event of a fire. This plan must make sure residents and others are safe, that a fire can be detected and residents are warned. They should be able to safely escape from the fire using the structural protection provided within the property if necessary and safe to do so.

There are more details on this on the London Fire Brigade website here:

<http://www.london-fire.gov.uk/landlords-or-housing-providers-know-the-plan.asp>

As you are aware London Fire Brigade officers are working with local authorities and landlords across the capital.

Fire crews are visiting the premises identified by the DCLG cladding testing programme to make sure that in the event of a fire, firefighting facilities are all in place.

The Brigade's fire safety inspecting officers are also carrying out more in-depth inspections jointly with representatives of the housing provider as part of an on-going process to check the general fire precautions within buildings. These are the fire precautions listed in the bullet points above. Inspecting officers will advise housing providers on any immediate actions that need to be taken, but all housing providers need to have looked at their own risk assessment before Brigade visits.

The Brigade's fire safety team targets its resources and inspections at those premises that present the highest risk. Where breaches of fire safety legislation occur our officers provide practical advice or, where the risk is serious, formal enforcement notices. We will work in partnership with housing providers to achieve a satisfactory level of fire safety.

It is important for London that right now all housing providers are being proactive and making sure that fire risk assessments are up to date and appropriate.

Finally, I believe it would be helpful for all of us to make sure the public understand that responsibility for making buildings safe sits with the owners or managers of that building. I have seen public references to the London Fire Brigade making buildings safe or issuing safety certificates, this does not reflect the role of the Brigade. It is the responsibility of the fire and rescue service to enforce fire safety legislation but we do not issue safety certificates or similar. It is for housing providers to ensure residents know how to contact them to raise concerns about their building or to ask about renovations being made to make buildings safe.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Dany Cotton', written in a cursive style.

Dany Cotton
London Fire Commissioner