

Risk room

A room with a function, use or contents presenting a risk of fire occurring and developing; typically kitchens, shared living rooms, bedsit rooms. On risk assessment may include bedrooms in some cases. Excludes bathrooms and WCs containing no fire risk. See also 'area of high fire risk'.

Room sealed appliance

A gas appliance whose combustion system is sealed from the room in which the appliance is located and which obtains combustion air from outside the premises, and which also vents the products of combustion to open air outside the premises. Most modern gas boilers are room sealed appliances.

Self-contained flats

The meaning within this guide relates to conversion flats in single occupation with all amenities behind the front door.

Shared house

See paragraph 35.

Significant findings

The actions to be taken as a result of a fire risk assessment and details of anyone especially at risk. Must be recorded in some cases (see paragraph 10.1).

Smoke seal/strip

A rubber or synthetic strip fitted around the edge of a fire door to restrict the passage of smoke between the door and the frame. Doors requiring a smoke seal have the letter 'S' after their performance time in minutes in their designation (for example FD30S). The smoke resistance of the door when fitted with the strip will have been tested to standards in BS476: part 31.1, 1983.

Soffit

Underside of staircase, balcony, architrave or arch.

Spandrel

A vertical partition enclosing a staircase (usually found on the ground floor enclosing a staircase to the basement, or in the basement enclosing a staircase to the ground floor).

Stand-by supply

Battery power to fire alarm or lighting systems which cuts in if mains power fails.

Storey

In this guidance, for the purposes of fire safety, when counting the number of storeys the reader should count all floors from the level of the final exit to the topmost floor (include mezzanines as storeys). Where the final exit is located on the ground floor (or raised ground floor) any lower ground floor/basement/cellar should not be counted. Therefore, a house with a basement, ground and two upper floors with its entrance/final exit at ground floor level should be counted as a three-storey house. Note: this is a different convention to that in the HMO licensing definition (which counts cellars/basements) as this guidance is considering the distance of travel to the final exit as a factor in determining fire risk.

Suitably qualified Person

See 'competent person'.

Test report

See 'fire test report'.

Voids

Unused empty spaces within a building.

Vulnerable group

The HHSRS Operating Guidance defines a vulnerable group as "a range of people for whom the risk arising from a hazard is greater than for any other group in the population." It is restricted to age groups, no other vulnerability is considered. The assessment of likelihood of an occurrence resulting in harm is assessed based on a member of this group living in the property. For the hazard of fire, the vulnerable group is persons over the age of 60. The vulnerable group is only used to assess the hazard – when it comes to enforcement decisions then the actual person living there is considered.

Where necessary

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 requires that fire precautions should be provided (and maintained) "where necessary". This means those which are needed to reasonably protect relevant persons from risks in case of fire. This will be determined by the findings of the risk assessment, including the preventative measures being taken. In practice, it is very unlikely that a properly conducted fire risk assessment, which takes into account all the matters relevant for the safety of persons in case of fire, will conclude that no fire precautions (including maintenance) are necessary.

Bibliography

The following references are included as a source of further detailed reading for specialists. It is not anticipated that landlords of property covered by this guide will need an in-depth knowledge of these publications and parts B, C and Appendix 1 to this guide should provide an adequate summary for most purposes.

Acts of Parliament and Statutory Instruments are available from The Office of Public Sector Information (OPSI) and via their website at www.opsi.gov.uk

British Standards are available from the British Standards Institution (BSI) from their Order Helpdesk on 0845 367 0242 and via their website at www.standardsuk.com

Health and Safety Executive publications are available from HSE books via their website at www.hsebooks.com

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Further acknowledgements

Gratitude is also owed to the following people who made up the project steering group and provided invaluable support for the project:

Andrew Chadney, London Fire and Rescue Authority
Andy Kippax, Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council
Brian Martin, Communities and Local Government
Elizabeth Brogan, National Landlords Association
Neil Coles, London Borough of Newham
Paul Dryden, Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service
Richard Drew, Westminster City Council
Richard Tacagni, LACORS
Rhian Blackman, Communities and Local Government
Tony Agar, London Fire and Rescue Authority

Lastly, LACORS thanks the following who contributed via the consultation process:

Andrew Jones
Association Of Residential Managing Agents
Avon Fire and Rescue Service
Barrow Borough Council
Bedford Borough Council
Berkshire Housing Group
Brighton & Hove City Council
Bristol City Council
British Property Federation
Broxtowe Borough Council
Camden Borough Council
Carlisle City Council
Cornwall Housing Sub Group
Cumbria Local Authorities
Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority
Devon Chief Officers Housing Group
Dover District Council
East London sub-regional Housing Group
East Staffordshire Borough Council
Eastbourne Borough Council
Electrical Contractors Association
Elmbridge Borough Council
Epping Forest Borough Council
Essex Fire and Rescue Authority
Fire and Security Association
Fire Industry Association Ltd
Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service

Greater Manchester Local Authorities
Harlow Council
Hart Borough Council
Hastings Borough Council
Herefordshire Council
Herts & Beds Housing Group
Homestamp
Humber sub-region Local Authorities & Fire and Rescue Authority
Kent Local Authorities
Lancashire Fire and Rescue Authority
Lincoln City Council
London HMO Regulatory Group
Merseyside Local Authorities and Fire and Rescue Authority
Newcastle City Council
National Federation of Residential Landlords
North Yorkshire Local Authorities
Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Authority
Oxfordshire Local Authorities
Peter Freeman Properties, Sheffield
Peterborough City Council
PJ Properties, Sheffield
Plymouth City Council
Residential Landlords Association
Rex Caplan, Landlord
Richard Clark
Richard Jones of Bury & Walkers Solicitors
Rushmoor Borough Council
Salisbury District Council
Sheffield & District Landlord Association
Sheffield City Council
Sheffield Student Landlord Association
South Yorkshire Local Authorities
Southampton City Council
Staffordshire Housing Technical Group
Tyne & Wear Fire and Rescue Authority
UNIPOL
University Of Essex
Watford Borough Council
West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority
West of England Local Authorities
Westminster City Council
Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority

Published by:

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Smith Square
London SW1P 3HZ

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

ISBN 978-1-84049-638-3

Printed by: Newman Thomson Ltd,
1 Jubilee Road, Burgess Hill, West Sussex,
RH15 9TL

Photographs: Third Avenue

Designed by: Liberata Design Studio

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Price £20



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