

APPENDIX B – Means of Escape – Fire Precautions

Housing Fire Safety - Quick Reference Guide (Wales)

(Prepared in association with the All Wales Housing Technical Panel)

This Quick Reference Guide provides a summary of the fire safety measures outlined in “Housing – Fire Safety: Guidance on fire safety provisions for certain types of existing housing” published by LACORS in August 2008.

The guide provides enforcement officers and landlords with a brief summary of appropriate fire safety measures that may be applied to a number of property types and aims to ensure consistency in the application of fire safety measures. However, officers and landlords should familiarise themselves with the provisions of the National Guidance.

The Housing Act 2004 introduced the Housing Health and Safety Rating System, which is a method by which housing conditions can be assessed. It uses a risk-based approach and its aim is to provide a system to enable risks from hazards to health and safety in dwellings to be removed or minimised. Some houses must also achieve an acceptable standard of fire safety under HMO Licensing provisions. These provisions are enforced by local councils.

In some premises, landlords must carry out a fire risk assessment under the provisions of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. These provisions are enforced by fire and rescue authorities.

The National LACORS Guidance recommends that individual risk based solutions to fire safety are applied to each individual property, and this document must not therefore be viewed as a prescriptive standard.

Please note that the works described in this document are a guide only. Alternative fire safety measures may be carried out in order to achieve an equivalent level of fire safety. However, if the recommendations in this Quick Reference Guide are followed it should be possible to achieve an acceptable level of fire safety in premises of normal risk. Additional measures may be required in higher risk premises.

How to use the Quick Reference Guide

Introduction

- The information given in this guide for provision of safe means of escape in case of fire relates to the 'ideal' level of fire safety measures required for each type of property. The 'ideal' is generally a 30 minute protected escape route for all HMOs.
- It may be possible to 'relax' these ideal standards in certain circumstances e.g. where a property is classed as low risk on completion of a Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) risk assessment.
- Please note that the examples D1, D2 etc. in the tables in guide relate to the examples in the main LACORS Guidance Manual.

To use the guide, you must first know:

- 1) The number of storeys of the property.
- 2) The manner of occupation.
- 3) The risk level of that property.

The appropriate table in the guide can then be used to provide a list of the type of work required for a specific property type.

1. Number of storeys

- Ground + first floor = 2 storeys
- Ground + first + 2nd floor = 3 storeys, etc.

NB. A 2 storey house with a habitable basement or attic room is classed as a 3 storey property (4 storeys, if both present).

2. Occupancy

There are 3 main types (See page 3 opposite for full definitions).

- Shared HMO
- Bed-sit 'type' HMO
- Traditional bed-sit HMO

NB. Shared HMOs and Bed-sit type HMOs are very similar, with subtle differences relating to type of tenancy, lockable doors, single group or individual/smaller groups.

3. Risk

This will be assessed by the inspecting officer. Generally 3 types:-

- Low risk
- Normal risk
- High risk

NB. This guide specifies details for 'normal' risk HMOs. The majority of HMOs will fall into this category. (Low risk properties must possess all the characteristics, as listed at the bottom of the table of Example D4 on page 4).

Summary

Once the 3 criteria have been established use the correct section of the guide for an idea of work required.

NB. It is strongly advised to await an HHSRS inspection from an officer from this Department prior to completing works.

Housing Fire Safety – A Quick Reference Guide

Note – for the purposes of this guide the following definitions apply:

Single household occupancy – a house occupied by a single person, a co-habiting couple or a family and where the property is not a house in multiple occupation.

Shared House HMO – A House in Multiple Occupation where the whole property has been rented out by an identifiable group of sharers such as students, work colleagues or friends as joint tenants. Each occupant normally has their own bedroom but they share the kitchen, dining facilities, bathroom, WC, living room and all other parts of the house. There is a single tenancy agreement. The group shares the characteristics of a single family household but is still technically an HMO because the occupants are not related.

Bedsit-type HMO (with Shared Cooking Facilities) – a building which has been divided into separate letting units or bedrooms (usually of one room only) and let to unconnected individuals or several small groups. Kitchens, bathrooms and WCs are usually shared.

Traditional Bedsit HMO (with Individual Cooking Facilities) - a building which has been divided into separate letting units or bedrooms (usually of one room only) and let to unconnected individuals. Each unit or bedroom may contain cooking facilities but bathrooms and WCs are shared.

<u>Single Household Occupancy</u>	
2 STOREY	3/4 STOREY
(EXAMPLE D1)	(EXAMPLE D2)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No requirement for protected route, but escape route should be sound, conventional construction and should not pass through risk rooms. • Where means of escape is through a risk room, the option of escape windows to habitable rooms may be considered. • Where construction standards are poor, travel distances are long, or other high risk factors are present, a 30 mins protected route may be required. • 30 mins separation to cellar/basement (including door) OR accept sound traditional construction in good repair. • Fire blanket in kitchen. • Grade D LD3 Alarm system (i.e. interlinked smoke alarms to escape route plus cellar/basement). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No requirement for protected route, but escape route should be sound, conventional construction and should not pass through risk rooms. • Where construction standards are poor, travel distances are long, or other high risk factors are present, a 30 mins protected route may be required. • 30 mins separation to cellar/basement (including door) OR accept sound traditional construction in good repair. • Fire blanket in kitchen. • Grade D LD3 Alarm system (i.e. interlinked smoke alarms to escape route plus cellar/basement).
Fire Safety Order does not apply to this type of property.	

2 STOREY SHARED HMO	2 STOREY BEDSIT-TYPE HMO (WITH SHARED COOKING FACILITIES)
(EXAMPLE D4)	(EXAMPLE D7)
<p>1. Ideal standard (for normal risk property)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) 30 minute protected route with FD30 Fire Doors (no smoke seals) (b) Walls/ceilings between units of accommodation to be of sound, traditional construction. (c) 30 mins separation to cellar/basement (including door) OR accept sound traditional construction in good repair. 2 Storey + habitable basement/attic – treat property as 3 storey shared house. (d) <i>Multi-purpose AFFF 6 litre foam or 1.5kg dry powder extinguisher on each floor in escape route recommended.</i> (e) Fire blanket in kitchen. (f) Grade D LD3 Alarm system (i.e. interlinked smoke alarms to escape route plus lounge and cellar/basement, and interlinked heat alarm to kitchen). <p>OR</p> <p>2. In low risk shared houses (see below)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solid, close fitting doors, AND/OR escape windows to rooms leading on to escape route. Walls/ceilings on escape route to be of sound, traditional construction. • Additional fire door (FD30) on last door from kitchen to escape route. • Plus specifications as (b) to (f) above. <p>NB. ‘Low’ risk properties are those having the following characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • low occupancy level - all able-bodied; • little chance of fire occurring and few combustibles/flamable materials; • little chance of fire spreading throughout property. Quick detection to allow occupants to escape • more than one acceptable escape route. 	<p>‘Bed-sit type’ houses - individual rooms with shared cooking facilities. (e.g. where property is not occupied by a single group, there are individual contracts, locks on doors etc).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Either - 30 minute protected route with FD30S Fire Doors or - in low risk properties, close fitting, solid doors and escape windows. (b) 30 mins separation to walls/ceilings between units of accommodation. (c) 30 mins separation to cellar/basement (including door) (d) Multi-purpose AFFF 6 litre foam or 1.5kg dry powder extinguisher required on each floor in escape route (subject to risk assessment under Fire Safety Order). (e) Fire blanket in kitchen. (f) Grade D LD2 Alarm – interlinked smoke alarms to escape route plus lounge and cellar/basement and heat alarm in each shared kitchen PLUS Interlinked Grade D smoke alarms in each bedroom.
	<p>Fire Safety Order MAY apply in these property types.</p>
2 STOREY TRADITIONAL BEDSIT (COOKING FACILITIES IN BEDROOMS)	2 STOREY TRADITIONAL BEDSIT (COOKING FACILITIES IN BEDROOMS)
(EXAMPLE D7)	(EXAMPLE D7)
	<p>Traditional Bedsits – <u>those with cooking facilities in each bedroom/unit of accommodation.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Either - 30 minute protected route with FD30S Fire Doors. (b) 30 mins separation to walls/ceilings between units of accommodation. (c) 30 mins separation to cellar/basement (including door) (d) Multi-purpose AFFF 6 litre foam or 1.5kg dry powder extinguisher required on each floor in escape route (subject to risk assessment under Fire Safety Order). (e) Fire blanket in kitchen. (f) <u>Mixed Alarm System. Grade D, LD2</u> system with interlinked smoke alarms to escape route and basement/cellar with interlinked heat alarms to each bedsit PLUS additional non-interlinked mains wired smoke alarm to each bedsit.
<p>Fire Safety Order does not apply to this type of property.</p>	<p>Fire Safety Order applies to these property types.</p>

3/4 STOREY SHARED HMO	3 STOREY BEDSIT-TYPE HMO (WITH SHARED COOKING FACILITIES)
(EXAMPLE D5)	(EXAMPLE D8)
<p>Ideal standard (for normal risk property)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) 30 minute protected route with FD30 Fire Doors (no smoke seals) (b) 30 mins separation to walls/ceilings between units of accommodation. (c) 30 mins separation to cellar/basement (including door). (d) <i>Multi-purpose AFFF 6 litre foam or 1.5kg dry powder extinguisher on each floor in escape route recommended.</i> (e) Fire blanket in kitchen. (f) Grade D LD3 Alarm system (i.e. interlinked smoke alarms to escape route plus lounge and cellar/basement, and heat alarm to kitchen. (g) No requirement for emergency lighting or signage, unless complex escape route. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) 30 minute protected route with FD30S Fire Doors (b) 30 mins separation to walls/ceilings between units of accommodation. (c) 30 mins separation to cellar/basement (including door) (d) Multi-purpose AFFF 6 litre foam or 1.5kg dry powder extinguisher required on each floor in escape route (subject to risk assessment under Fire Safety Order). (e) Fire blanket in kitchen. (f) Grade A LD2 Alarm system –interlinked smoke detectors to escape route plus each bedsit, lounge and cellar/basement, and heat detector to shared kitchen. To include control panel, call points and min 75db at bedhead. (g) No requirement for emergency lighting or signage, unless complex escape route. <p>Fire Safety Order MAY apply in these property types.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">3 STOREY TRADITIONAL BED-SIT (COOKING FACILITIES IN BEDROOMS)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(EXAMPLE D8)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) 30 minute protected route with FD30S Fire Doors (b) 30 mins separation to walls/ceilings between units of accommodation. (c) 30 mins separation to cellar/basement (including door) (d) Multi-purpose AFFF 6 litre foam or 1.5kg dry powder extinguisher required on each floor in escape route (subject to risk assessment under Fire Safety Order). (e) Fire blanket in kitchen. (f) <u>Grade A LD2 Alarm system</u> –interlinked smoke detectors to escape route plus lounge and cellar/basement, <u>and</u> interlinked heat detector to each bedsit with cooking facilities. To include control panel, call points and min 75db at bedhead <p style="text-align: center;">PLUS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (g) Non interlinked Grade D smoke detectors in EACH bed-sit.
Fire Safety Order does not apply to this type of property.	Fire Safety Order applies to these property types.

Houses Converted to Self-Contained Flats	
2 STOREY	3/4 STOREY
(EXAMPLE D10)	(EXAMPLE D11)
<p>(a) 30 minute protected common escape route with FD30S Fire Doors (with smoke seals) i.e. flat entrance doors</p> <p>(b) Within individual flats – sound, well constructed and close fitting doors.</p> <p>(c) 30 mins separation to walls/ceilings between each flat.</p> <p>(d) 30 mins separation to cellar/basement (including door)</p> <p>(e) Multi-purpose AFFF 6 litre foam or 1.5kg dry powder extinguisher required on each floor in <u>common escape route</u> (subject to risk assessment under Fire Safety Order).</p> <p>(f) Fire blanket in kitchen.</p> <p>(g) <u>Grade D LD2 Alarm system</u> –interlinked smoke detectors to common escape route plus heat detector in entrance hall of each flat</p> <p><u>PLUS</u></p> <p>(h) Non-interlinked Grade D smoke detectors in hallway of each flat.</p> <p>(i) No requirement for emergency lighting or signage, unless complex escape route.</p>	<p>(a) 30 minute protected common escape route with FD30S Fire Doors (with smoke seals) i.e. flat entrance doors</p> <p>(b) Within individual flats – sound, well constructed and close fitting doors.</p> <p>(c) 30 mins separation to walls/ceilings between each flat.</p> <p>(d) 30 mins separation to cellar/basement (including door)</p> <p>(e) Multi-purpose AFFF 6 litre foam or 1.5kg dry powder extinguisher required on each floor in <u>common escape route</u> (subject to risk assessment under Fire Safety Order).</p> <p>(f) Fire blanket in kitchen.</p> <p>(g) <u>Grade A LD2 Alarm system</u> –interlinked smoke detectors to common escape route plus heat detector in entrance hall of each flat. To include control panel, call points and min 75db at bed head</p> <p><u>PLUS</u></p> <p>(h) Non-interlinked Grade D smoke detectors in hallway of each flat.</p> <p>(i) No requirement for emergency lighting or signage, unless complex escape route.</p>
Fire Safety Order applies to these property types.	

A Note on Fire Extinguishers and Alarm Systems

In shared houses, a multi-purpose fire extinguisher (type 1.5kg dry powder or 6 litre AFFF Foam) is **recommended** on each floor within the escape route.

In all HMOs where the Fire Safety Order applies, including houses converted to self contained flats and bedsits, multi-purpose extinguishers (type as above) are **required** unless the landlord can demonstrate through risk assessment that an acceptable level of safety can be achieved without the provision of extinguishers.

LD3 – A system incorporating detectors in circulation spaces that form part of the escape route from the dwelling only.

LD2 – A system incorporating detectors in circulation spaces that form part of the escape route, and in all rooms that present a high fire risk to occupants.

Grade D – A system of one or more mains powered smoke / heat alarms each with battery standby supply. There is no control panel.

Grade A – A system of mains powered smoke / heat detectors, which are linked to a control panel to give information on the location of the fire or any fault. In general the system must incorporate manual call points, which should be located on each floor level and at final points of exit.