

## Annex 2: Small Bed and Breakfast and Self-catering Premises

1. The scope of this annex is described in paragraph 13 of the main guidance as simple guidance for well-managed small bed and breakfast and self-catering premises and applies to:

- Premises used for self-catering holidays if occupied by not more than 10 persons.
- Bed and breakfast premises in the home of a resident operator (for not more than 8 guests)

and which, in either case, have a means of escape from bedrooms via a traditional 'hall' with at least one exit directly to the outside; do not have letting or guest accommodation below a ground floor or above a first floor; do not act as the principal residence for paying guests; and do not have any storey area over 200 m<sup>2</sup> internal floor space.

### Introduction

2. This guidance is for proprietors of certain small self-catering and bed and breakfast properties who have duties under Part 3 of the [2005 Act](#). It is designed to help proprietors understand steps that they should be taking to meet their legal obligations.

3. In general, Part 3 of the [2005 Act](#) and the [Fire Safety \(Scotland\) Regulations 2006](#) seek to ensure the safety of persons (whether residents, visitors, employees or others), in the event of a fire, by setting out the responsibilities of persons for fire safety. Anyone who has control to any extent of the premises will have some responsibilities for ensuring that those occupying the premises are safe from harm caused by fire.

4. This guidance applies only to fire safety law. Additionally, building regulations apply to the construction of new premises or conversions, alterations or extensions to existing premises intended to be used for bed and breakfast or self-catering. If in doubt you should contact your Local Authority building standards department for further advice.

### What does the Law require?

5. Fire safety law requires any person who has control of the premises to carry out an assessment to identify risks to the safety of persons in

respect of harm caused by fire in the premises. It also requires them to take fire safety measures which are reasonable to ensure the safety of persons.

6. As the owner or operator you are likely to be the best person to know about the risks on your own premises and how they can be controlled. You should therefore be able to carry out the fire safety risk assessment yourself. Guidance on the steps you should take are provided below.

7. The Fire and Rescue Service will not carry out a fire safety risk assessment for you, but will be able to give you information and advice. They may also visit your premises, ask about your fire safety risk assessment and examine the fire safety measures. If they are not satisfied with the steps you have taken, they could take formal enforcement action. As an initial step, however, they are more likely to work with you to help you take appropriate measures to ensure the safety of your guests.

### **Benchmarks for fire safety**

8. The following benchmarks describe fire safety measures to ensure the safety of occupants should a fire occur (step 3 of your fire safety risk assessment). Before you consider these benchmarks, you will want to carry out your fire safety risk assessment and take any practical steps highlighted as a result to reduce or limit the risk of a fire starting. It is for you as the proprietor to judge what practical steps to take in individual circumstances.

9. These benchmarks are generally applicable to typical situations in a well- managed property for which it is not expected that a higher level of fire safety measures will be needed to meet obligations under fire safety law. You may of course voluntarily decide to provide enhanced measures in excess of the legal obligation.

### **Benchmarks for small Self-catering Property**

#### **Fire detection and warning**

10. A smoke alarm(s) should be installed in the hall, or for a two-storey property to both ground floor hall and first floor landing, so that there is a smoke alarm within 3 m maximum of each bedroom door and no part of a hall or corridor is further than 7.5 m from an alarm. A

smoke alarm should also be installed in each living room and separate dining room and a heat alarm should be installed in the kitchen.

11. Where a property has more than three bedrooms, smoke alarms should also be installed in each bedroom. (In such case, the smoke alarm(s) installed in the hall or corridor need not meet the 3 m requirement).

12. Smoke alarms installed in halls and landings should be of the optical type<sup>1</sup> (although there is no need to replace existing non-optical alarms during their lifespan).

13. Alarms should be installed in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Alarms should be powered by either:

- A long-life tamper-proof lithium battery or equivalent, or
- Mains electricity (with an additional stand-by supply in the form of a battery or capacitor).

14. The smoke alarms should be capable of rousing sleeping occupants therefore alarms should be interlinked so that actuation of one causes actuation of the others. Interlinking may be by hard wiring or wire-free.

15. You should establish a system which ensures regular testing and maintenance of the alarms.

16. If long-life battery powered systems are used, you should consider installing mains-powered alarms permanently wired to a circuit when the life of the battery is ended, or when repair or redecoration work is being carried out to the property.

1 An optical smoke alarm is a conventional smoke alarm which utilises a light obscuration principle to detect smoke and is responsive to the type of smoke particles which could enter circulation areas during a fire

## **Doors**

17. A door between a room (other than a bathroom or toilet) and any corridor, hall or stair which would be the route out in the case of a fire, need not be a fire door<sup>2</sup> but should be capable of holding back smoke and fire for sufficient time to allow occupants to escape. An example of a suitable door type is a solid timber door.

18. The following check list will help you decide if you need to repair, adjust or replace any door:

- The door should be close fitting to its frame with gaps of no more than 4 mm.
- The door should have no sizeable splits, gaps or cracks and should not be warped.
- Non-fire-rated glazing may fail early in a fire.
- Hollow type doors offer poor protection.

19. For a two-storey property with sleeping accommodation on the upper floor, it is important that if a fire occurs in a ground floor room off the escape route while persons are asleep, the door of the room on fire remains closed. Where there are more than three bedrooms on the upper floor of a two-storey property, these ground floor doors should be provided with self-closing devices<sup>3</sup>.

20. Occupiers should be advised of the benefit of keeping doors closed at night to hold back fire and smoke.

21. Doors will only be effective at holding back fire and smoke if the corridor or hall structure also has the ability to hold back fire.

#### **Exit door locks**

22. Although there may be a key operated lock on the door, to facilitate escape from fire the final exit door should be capable of being easily opened from the inside without the use of a key, although it remains the personal choice of the occupiers how to secure the door.

#### **Lighting**

23. If a fire disrupts the normal lighting there should be sufficient illumination for occupants to find their way out of the property. Where an escape route does not receive adequate illumination from a street light or other external source, alternative lighting should be provided. This could be through ensuring that the hall and landing (if applicable) have one or more automatic plug-in night lights of a type which continue to operate if the mains electricity fails.

24. Where additional lighting is provided, you should establish a system which ensures that the plug-in light or other lighting is present and in working order at the commencement of each let.

## **Fire-fighting equipment**

25. A fire blanket should be provided in the kitchen for the occupants to use.

## **Emergency fire action plan**

26. You should prepare a plan of what action any occupier should take in the event of fire. This would include the route of escape, how to raise the alarm and how to call the Fire Service. This should be available for each party arriving at the premises. A simple notice could be fixed in an easily visible place such as the hall, and/or be provided within a welcome pack. You should also ensure that the occupier is advised of basic precautions such as closing doors at night to inhibit the spread of smoke, and the need to inform the owner or agent if any equipment develops a fault (such as electrical or smoke alarm defects).

## **Benchmarks for Small Bed and Breakfast Property**

### **Fire detection and warning**

27. For a single storey property, a smoke alarm(s) should be installed in the hall or corridor, sited so that no part of a hall or corridor is further than 7.5 m from a smoke alarm and no bedroom door is further than 3 m from a smoke alarm. A smoke alarm should also be installed in all living rooms and separate dining rooms and a heat alarm should be installed in the kitchen.

28. For a two-storey property, a smoke alarm(s) should be installed in both the ground floor hall and first floor landing sited so that no part of a hall or corridor is further than 7.5 m from a smoke alarm and no bedroom door is further than 3 m from a smoke alarm. A smoke alarm should also be installed in all living rooms and separate dining rooms and in any ground floor bedroom which has a door to the hall, corridor or stair. A heat alarm should be installed in the kitchen.

29. In all cases where there are more than three guest bedrooms, smoke alarms should also be installed in each bedroom. (In such cases, the smoke alarm(s) in the hall or corridor need not meet the 3 m requirement).

30. Smoke alarms installed in halls and landings should be of the optical type<sup>4</sup> (although there is no need to replace existing non-optical alarms during their lifetime).

31. Alarms should be powered by either:

- A long-life tamper-proof lithium battery or equivalent, or
- Mains electricity (with an additional stand-by supply in the form of a battery or capacitor).

32. The smoke alarms should be capable of rousing sleeping occupants (including the proprietor) therefore alarms should be interlinked so that actuation of one causes actuation of the others. Interlinking may be by hard wiring or wire-free.

33. Alarms should be installed in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

You should establish a system which ensures regular testing and maintenance of the alarms.

34. If long-life battery powered systems are used you should consider installing mains-powered alarms permanently wired to a circuit when the lifetime of the battery is ended or when repair or redecoration work is being carried out to the property.

### **Doors**

35. A door between a room (other than a bathroom or toilet) and a corridor, hall or stair which would be the route out in the case of a fire need not be a fire door<sup>5</sup> but should be capable of holding back smoke and fire for sufficient time to allow the occupants to escape.

36. The following check list will help you decide if you need to repair, adjust or replace any door:

- The door should be close fitting to its frame with gaps of no more than 4 mm.
- The door should have no sizeable splits, gaps or cracks and should not be warped.
- Non-fire-rated glazing may fail early in a fire.
- Hollow type doors offer poor protection.

37. For a two-storey property with sleeping accommodation on the upper floor, it is important that if a fire occurs in a ground floor room off the escape route while persons are asleep, the door of the room on fire remains closed. Such doors on the ground floor should therefore be provided with self-closing devices<sup>6</sup>.

38. Doors will only be effective at holding back fire and smoke if the corridor or hall structure also has the ability to hold back fire.

#### **Exit door locks**

39. To facilitate escape from fire the exit door should only be secured with a lock or fastening which can be readily opened from the inside, without the use of a key, while the premises are occupied.

#### **Lighting**

40. If a fire disrupts the normal lighting there should be sufficient illumination for occupants to find their way out of the property. Where an escape route does not receive adequate illumination from a street light or other external source, alternative lighting should be provided. This could be through ensuring that in the hall and landing (if applicable) you have one or more automatic plug-in night lights of a type which continue to operate if the mains electricity fails.

41. Where additional lighting is provided, you should establish a system which ensures that the plug-in light or other lighting is present and in working order.

#### **Fire-fighting equipment**

42. A fire blanket should be provided in the kitchen for the operator to use.

#### **Emergency fire action plan**

43. You should prepare a plan of what action you will take in the event of fire including raising the alarm, ensuring all guests are evacuated and calling the Fire Service. A simple notice should be displayed in a prominent place in each bedroom, so that the guests know what to do in the event of fire. You may also wish to give them any further advice, such as the regular emptying of ash trays (if smoking is permitted) and the use of their own portable electrical equipment, when they arrive.

44. You should regularly carry out a rehearsal 'fire drill' when no guests are present to ensure that everyone is aware of their role in a fire.

### **How to carry out a Fire Safety Risk Assessment**

45. The steps below are intended to help you through the process of carrying out an assessment of the fire risks in your property.

#### **Step 1: Who is at risk?**

Consider the numbers and capability of people who may occupy your property and who could be at a risk. This includes guests, owners, any other visitors including cleaners, tradespersons etc. Make a note if particularly vulnerable persons are likely such as children, elderly, or disabled persons (you will need to consider the fire safety of guests with any special needs or vulnerabilities).

#### **Step 2: What potential causes of fire are there?**

Think about how a fire could start on your premises and identify sources of ignition such as cooking, heaters, open fires and smoking. Do family members smoke? Are there designated bedrooms where guests are permitted to smoke? Where are electrical appliances such as tumble dryers and TVs? What is the likelihood of a deliberate fire?

Consider what could burn and act as fuel for a fire. This could include furniture, bedding, laundry, wood/kindling for open fires, rubbish, flammable liquids, solvents, chemicals or gases, cooking oil, paint, white spirit, cleaning products, aerosols, LPG, or fuels such as petrol.

#### **Step 3 Evaluate the risk**

Consider what could happen if a fire occurred and how quickly it could spread. The construction of the property can affect how fire can spread, it may spread faster if there are multiple layers of wallpaper, polystyrene ceiling tiles or interior wood paneling. If rubbish stored outside caught fire could it spread to inside the property or block an exit door?

#### **Step 4: What can you do to reduce/remove risk, what fire safety measures should be put in place?**

Now that you have considered the people at risk and the potential for a fire to occur, you can take steps as necessary to reduce the risk

both of a fire occurring and of injury or loss of life should a fire occur. You may also wish to consider the risk of damage to your property, and any subsequent loss of business.

If ignition sources and fuel sources are reduced and these are kept apart, the chances of a fire starting are low. The following lists some of the actions that are advised for dwellings as part of normal community fire safety which you should consider to reduce the risk of a fire occurring:

- Ensure good housekeeping, so that storage is in designated areas only, is orderly, refuse and packaging is disposed of frequently and carefully, bins are secure.
- Ensure flammable materials and liquids are stored properly, away from ignition sources, electrical fuse box and meter, boilers etc. Do not store aerosols in damp areas (such as under sinks).
- Avoid the use of portable gas heaters, use only in an emergency when only butane should be used.
- Ensure that electrical and gas appliances and equipment are maintained, serviced and kept in good working order. Clean extract equipment to kitchens.
- Replace any chip pan with a deep fat fryer with a thermostat.
- Individual heating appliances should be fixed in position and guarded.
- Ensure the electrical installation to the property is in good order, get it checked if in any doubt. Ensure correct wiring of plugs and correct fuse ratings.
- If anyone smokes ensure ashtrays are provided, emptied regularly and safely. Inspect or advise your guests to inspect smoking areas before bedtime.
- Keep halls, corridors and stairs which would be used to escape from a fire clear and hazard free and advise guests to do this also. In particular keep clear of items which can burn, or are a source of ignition such as electrical equipment, coat racks, refuse, laundry, upholstered furniture, portable heaters or gas cylinders.
- If your property is in an area where vandalism or deliberate fires can be a problem, consider security measures to prevent

entrance to the grounds of the property and access to refuse storage and storage of any flammable liquids/gases.

You should then consider what further safety measures are necessary to reduce the risk of injury or loss of life should a fire occur in your premises, for example:

- Means for detecting and effectively warning occupants of a fire which occurs in any part of the premises.
- Means to restrict the spread of fire and smoke from the source to other areas especially the escape route.
- Means of escape which are easy to use at any time by persons who are not familiar with the premises, for example guests who have recently arrived.
- Means for fighting a small fire such as a fire in a waste bin or in a cooking pan.

Guidance on what is expected in these areas is provided in the section: 'Benchmarks for Fire Safety'

### **Step 5: Formulate a plan**

You should draw up a plan for implementation of any improvements you need to make with your priorities and timescales.

### **Step 6: Record**

It is a good idea to keep a written record of your fire safety risk assessment. This will make it easier for you to review your assessment and it will also be easier to demonstrate that you have carried out an assessment. You should also record the arrangements for reviewing your fire safety risk assessment, your emergency fire action plan and the maintenance arrangements for fire safety measures.

### **Step 7: Review**

You need to regularly review your fire safety risk assessment. Is there anything that has altered the risk and means you need to consider again the fire safety measures you have in place? For example are you doing building work, maintenance or decorative work? Do you have a different range of guests such as elderly or disabled?

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