

Home life

Fire safety
edition

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Fire safety in your home

An aerial photograph of a residential area in Wandsworth, London. The image shows a dense cluster of terraced houses with grey roofs, interspersed with green trees. In the background, several tall apartment blocks and the London skyline, including the London Eye, are visible under a blue sky with scattered white clouds. A semi-transparent blue rectangular box is overlaid on the image, containing the main title text in white.

Welcome to this special issue of Homelife

The tragic events at Grenfell Tower have shocked everyone in the country and our thoughts are with all those affected. We are committed to quickly learning any lessons that may emerge in the upcoming weeks and months.

We place an absolute priority on fire safety across our housing stock and we want to provide you with information about fire safety in your home.

Every Wandsworth Council managed block has an up to date Fire Risk Assessment completed by an independent expert and subject to an annual review. Our dedicated Estate Services Team regularly carry out rigorous checks to ensure our buildings remain safe and comply with the highest standards. We also carry out an annual inspection to all our blocks which looks in greater detail at all aspects of fire safety in the internal areas.

We can confirm that every time there has been a domestic fire in a Wandsworth Council property in recent years this has been contained and did not spread to other properties within the building which is very reassuring.

However, as every fire is different we are taking absolutely nothing for granted. Following fire brigade advice we have made the decision to install sprinklers in all our high rise blocks.

We are working closely with London Fire Brigade and will continue to follow any further advice they issue.

As a council we are committed to keeping our residents safe, but there are also ways you can help. This newsletter gives advice and tips on how to prevent fires in your home as well as what to do in the case of a fire. It also sets out what we do to ensure your home is fire safe and who you can contact for further information.

Brian Reilly
Director of Housing and
Regeneration



Do you have working smoke alarms?

Test your smoke alarms regularly.

If you don't have smoke alarms, contact your area team who will provide you with these free of charge.

Know your plan

There will be a blue fire action poster in the lobby of your block. Read this and familiarise yourself with what to do in case of a fire.

Practice your escape route in case of a fire within your property. Make sure everyone in your household knows the route.

Make sure everyone in your household knows where to find the door and window keys.



Watch out for faulty appliances

Nearly one fire a day in London involves white goods such as dishwashers, washing machines, tumble dryers, fridges and freezers.

There are some simple things you can do to make yourself safer:

- If your appliance starts making a strange noise, don't ignore it. If you suspect there might be a problem, always unplug it and contact the manufacturer or a qualified repair technician.
- Regularly check your appliances: visit london-fire.gov.uk/total-recalls/what-you-can-do-to-stay-safe.asp to see if you have a product which has been recalled.
- Recalled machines: Whirlpool have recalled a range of faulty machines after identifying a safety defect last year; Hotpoint, Indesit, and Creda tumble dryers built between April 2004 and September 2015 may be a fire risk.
- If you own a product which has been recalled: unplug and stop using it immediately until it has been checked and repaired or replaced. Contact the manufacturer or a qualified repair technician.
- Always keep white goods in a safe place out of the way and keep hallways clear.
- Register your appliance at www.registermyappliance.org.uk. You'll be informed if the manufacturer discovers any issues with it.

In the case of a fire
Call 999 immediately



How can residents help?

- ▲ Do not overload electrical sockets!
- ▲ Keep communal areas such as corridors and staircases clear
- ▲ Don't wedge open fire doors
- ▲ Don't smoke in communal areas
- ▲ Never smoke in bed
- ▲ Make sure cigarettes and candles are put out properly
- ▲ Keep matches, lighters and candles out of reach of children
- ▲ Do not dry clothes too close to heaters or fires.
- ▲ Ensure you have a smoke alarm and test it regularly
- ▲ Keep all escape routes clear
- ▲ If you have concerns about fire safety please report these to your local area team.

Familiarise yourself with the fire action plan see the blue poster in your lobby.



The poster features a large exclamation mark icon at the top. Below it, the title 'Fire action' is written in white on a blue background. The main body of the poster contains two columns of text under the heading 'If there is a fire in your property:'. The left column lists instructions such as 'Alert any other people in the property', 'Leave the room at once and close the door to prevent smoke and fire spreading', and 'Call the fire brigade on 999'. The right column lists instructions such as 'Stay inside your property if you don't know where the fire is', 'Close your front door and your windows to prevent smoke entering your property', and 'If you feel threatened by fire or smoke and it is safe to leave your property, leave the building by the stairs'. At the bottom, there is a note: 'If there is a fire, you should leave the block only if your property is affected by fire or smoke. Stay in your property if you are not directly affected by the fire, otherwise you may be putting yourself and your household at risk from smoke. If you are required to evacuate the fire brigade will notify you.' The Wandsworth logo is in the bottom right corner.

Council installing water sprinklers in high rise blocks

More than 100 high rise housing blocks in Wandsworth are to be fitted with sprinkler systems.

The council has taken the decision to retro-fit this additional fire safety measure in all its tower blocks of ten storeys and above. The decision brings these blocks into line with newly built homes which are required to contain sprinklers if they are over this height.

The sprinkler systems will be fitted inside each flat in the 100 blocks.

Wandsworth Council leader Ravi Govindia said: "The dreadful and tragic events at Grenfell House have brought this issue into sharp focus and

although we do not believe there is a specific risk to any of our high rise properties we are simply not prepared to take a chance. Our residents can be reassured that everything that can be done is being done to protect them, their families and their homes."

Wandsworth Borough Fire Commander Darren Munro added: "I very much welcome this announcement and we will continue to work closely with the council to make sure the borough and its residents are as safe as possible."

Book a home fire safety visit with the fire brigade

The London Fire Brigade will visit you in your home and provide you with advice to minimise the risk of a fire.

Contact the London Fire Brigade today on **0800 028 4428** or visit www.london-fire.gov.uk/HomeFireSafetyVisit.asp

Visit: wandsworth.gov.uk/safetyinthehome

Contact your area housing team

Central area:
0208 871 5333
Housingcentralteam@wandsworth.gov.uk

Eastern area:
020 8871 7439
Housingeasterteam@wandsworth.gov.uk

Western area:
020 8871 5530
Housingwesternarea@wandsworth.gov.uk

Southern area:
020 8871 7288
[Housingouthernteam@wandsworth.gov.uk](mailto:Housingsouthernteam@wandsworth.gov.uk)

Fire safety in Wandsworth Council properties: frequently asked questions

What is the policy in the event of a fire?

If there is a fire within your home

- Leave immediately closing the door behind you.
- Dial 999 for the fire brigade.
- Shout fire to alert other people.

If there is a fire outside your home

- Dial 999.
- It is usually safer to stay in your home until you can be safely evacuated by fire fighters.
- If smoke or flames enter your home leave at once and close the door behind you.
- Always use the stairs.

The Homesafe booklet provides further advice about safety in the home.

Do you fit smoke alarms?

All properties are let with smoke alarms. Residents can be provided with replacement smoke alarms free of charge. The smoke alarms have a 10 year battery life and we would recommend that residents test these on a monthly basis.

What is the position regarding fire alarms and fire drills?

In line with normal practice for purpose built residential blocks the Council operates a 'stay put' strategy and therefore we do not fit fire alarms in communal parts and fire drills are not required.

What is the position regarding fire extinguishers?

Fire extinguishers are not provided in the communal areas of the building. We cannot, and would not, expect residents to fight fires.

The Council does not provide equipment in people's properties however advice on fire safety in the home is provided in the Homesafe booklet that all tenants receive (this is also available on our website). The London Fire Brigade will also carry out free home fire safety visits.

What is the policy on smoking?

Smoking is prohibited in the common parts of the building. There is a 'No Smoking' sign displayed in the ground floor lift lobby of all our blocks. If you smoke inside your property ensure you put cigarettes out properly.

Is emergency lighting fitted?

The lighting to communal areas of the block runs on a separate circuit and it is highly unlikely that a fire in a flat will mean the communal lighting stops working. The Council does have a programme of fitting emergency lighting and this will be reviewed in light of recent events.

What fire notices are displayed?

Fire Action Notices are displayed in the ground floor lobby of every block across the Borough and should be read. Regular inspections are carried out by Estate Services Officers but if you see any damage to these signs this should be reported to the estate services section for action.

Additional signs are to be provided on every floor warning residents not to use the lifts in the event of a fire.

What fire safety checks are carried out in my block?

A range of fire safety inspections of your block are carried out on a weekly, quarterly and annual basis, by trained estate services officers. This includes:

- Checks to ensure that no combustible materials such as rubbish are stored in corridors and communal areas.
- Checks to ensure nothing is obstructing means of escape and communal areas such as bikes, prams etc.
- Inspection of the block and all fire doors to ensure they are in good repair and functioning correctly.
- Inspection of fire equipment e.g. dry risers.

What are Fire Risk Assessments (FRAs)?

The Council is legally required to carry out FRAs which cover the communal areas of the block (not individual properties). Flat entrance doors form part of the protection to the common escape route so these are included in the assessment. The purpose of the assessment is to evaluate the risk to people from fire, taking into account existing fire safety measures, and to determine whether additional measures are necessary. Areas to look at include:

- Measures to reduce the risk of fire and the risk of the spread of fire.
- Means of escape from fire.
- Measures to ensure that escape routes can be safely and effectively used.
- An emergency plan, including procedures for residents in the event of a fire.
- Measures to mitigate the effects of fire.

FRAs were completed for all our blocks in 2016 by an independent expert and are reviewed annually.

A range of general fire safety information is available from the London Fire Brigade.

Visit: www.london-fire.gov.uk/FireSafety.asp

Phone: 0800 028 4428

Email: info@london-fire.gov.uk

Textphone: 020 7960 3629

In an emergency always call 999.

