

# Fire Safety in Purpose Built Blocks of Flats

The guidance document is to ensure adequate fire safety in purpose-built blocks of flats, regardless of age. Practical advice is offered on how to assess the risk from fire and how to manage fire safety in such buildings.

The document also includes case studies based on the commonly found issues in blocks of flats, with suggested fire safety solutions.

The guide was originally produced in 2011 and summarised the legislation, guidance, and best practice at the time of writing and should be viewed as no longer comprehensive. The Home Office has published this revised version of the document.

The guide is intended to meet the needs of housing providers and enforcing authorities for guidance tailored to purpose-built blocks of flats. These buildings are only a small part of the scope of other guidance documents. This document is intended to assist responsible persons to comply with the FSO and the Housing Act 2004.

It is intended for buildings which have been constructed as purpose-built blocks of flats. It applies to existing blocks only. Fire safety design in new blocks of flats is governed by the Building Regulations 2010, but, once a block is occupied, this guide is applicable.

The scope of this guide excludes buildings converted into blocks of flats. However, the guidance contained in this document will largely be applicable to such buildings, provided that – at the time of conversion – the work was carried out in accordance with the then current Building Regulations. In particular, the guidance is likely to be relevant to conversions in which, as a result of compartmentation, a ‘stay-put’ policy is appropriate.

Within this guide, the term ‘flat’ is used to describe a self-contained domestic dwelling within a building. Other terms, such as ‘apartment’, are commonly used to describe such accommodation. The term ‘flats’ is intended to include those arranged on more than one storey, such as maisonettes (duplex apartments).

The content of this document is for information purposes only and does not constitute professional advice by Metro or any of its constituent companies.

This guide also includes flats within sheltered housing schemes and blocks containing flats intended for multiple occupation by, for example, students or key workers. However, the guide does not address buildings of this nature in which, in the event of a fire in a flat, the entire building is evacuated simultaneously.

The guide does not address:

- Dwelling houses and bungalows.
- Shared houses.
- HMOs.
- Hostels.
- Flats used as holiday lets.

This guide does not address ancillary or communal facilities, such as a lounge, gym or a hairdresser in a sheltered housing scheme. Although such facilities must be included in the scope of the fire risk assessment for the block, the fire precautions should be considered on a case-by-case basis, following general guidance applicable to buildings other than flats.

The guide does cover blocks with flats located above commercial premises, such as hotels and shops. However, guidance on fire safety in the commercial element is outside the scope of the document.

The guide applies only to England. However, it is likely to be relevant in Wales, where the same fire safety legislation applies. It is aimed at those who manage, give advice on and enforce standards in purpose-built blocks of flats. This specifically includes those undertaking fire risk assessments of such buildings, including those contracted to do this on a commercial basis, for example private sector housing providers (landlords), social housing providers, and residents’ management companies.

The full guidance can be read at [Fire Safety in Purpose Built Flats](#)

For more information, please contact us on **020 7960 3939** or visit our website: [www.metro-safety.co.uk](http://www.metro-safety.co.uk)

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