

Fire Safety Newsletter

I am sure that each & every member of our TMOs are shocked, horrified and nervous about the events of Wednesday 14th June 2017 in London. Our thoughts remain with everyone affected by the Grenfell Tower tragedy.

This information letter is aimed to provide all of our residents with clarity and comfort in the safety of your home and to confirm that having liaised with the Fire Service the “Stay Put Policy” for our properties remains valid and in place.

On contacting the Fire Service, their advice is to maintain a stay put policy so long as we all remain vigilante and our inspection regimes are completed.

As a reminder of the investment in Walsall we have:-

- Invested over £1.5 million in fire protection works
- Installed Fire Alarms & Sprinkler Systems to our refuse areas
- Installed fire protection to all refuse chutes in high-rise landings
- Communal decoration has been with a fire retardant finish
- Undertaken professional Fire Risk Assessments in 2015
- Delivered training to TMO staff in Fire Safety Management 2015
- Renewed all dry-riser valves to 21 high-rise blocks
- Replaced end of life fire doors and screens

In the event of fire in your home – advice from the Fire Service

If there's a fire, you need to act quickly. Make sure you are prepared and that everyone in your home knows exactly what to do.

- 1. Alert everyone - Make sure everyone knows about the fire, shout and get everyone together**
- 2. Get everyone out - You should have an escape route planned that everyone in your home is familiar with**

Remember:

- Don't delay to save valuables or look for pets. Don't investigate the fire
- Crawl on the floor if there's smoke - the air is cleaner near the floor; smoke is poisonous and can kill you
- As you go out, only open the doors you need to and close any open doors you can to slow the spread of the fire
- Before you open a door, touch it with the back of your hand; if it's warm, don't open it – the fire could be on the other side
- If you're escaping with others, stay together if you can

In the event of a fire in communal areas

- If you find a fire in the communal area, leave the building using the nearest safe exit and phone 999 for the Fire and Rescue Service.
- Other residents not directly affected by the fire should 'stay put' and remain in their flat unless directed to leave by the Fire and Rescue Service. You may wish to alert your neighbours if it is safe for you to do so.

If you hear the fire alarm but do not have a fire in your flat:

- Phone 999 for the Fire and Rescue Service
- Make sure your front door is closed, wait in a room with a window and close any doors in between
- Wait until the situation has been assessed by the Fire and Rescue Service. If they consider you are at risk, they will evacuate you from the building
- If the fire is not in your flat but you feel safer leaving the flat then you should leave the building and wait in a safe place.

How to prevent a fire in the communal areas

- Keep the communal areas secure, only allow access to people you know and trust
- Keep the communal areas clear so that you can leave the building safely without tripping over people's belongings
- Do not leave items where they might block the exit doors
- Contact your TMO office to report any flammable items stored in the communal areas, or if there are items blocking your access route
- Your TMOs are completing regular inspections of the communal areas to identify and address any fire risks. Please do not hesitate to contact your TMO office if you wish to report any concerns you have regarding fire safety where you live.

West Midlands Fire Service have asked us to communicate the following messages to residents:

- Flats are designed to give 60 minutes of fire protection so that fire can't spread from flat to flat.
- Ventilation in the corridor gives any smoke (that escapes with the resident) a way out of the building to keep the escape route clear.
- The floors in high-rise flats are typically made of concrete to give at least 60 minutes of fire protection.
- Fire doors and walls are used inside the building to prevent the spread of fire; close doors behind you to keep the fire at bay.
- Staircases are usually protected with two fire doors (one might be the front doors to the flats) to keep the staircase available for use.
- When stay put policies are used (sometimes called 'defend in place') they are intended to give occupiers of flats a choice to stay in their flat (protected from fire) or to leave, if they feel threatened by fire i.e. fire occurs in a flat, the occupants leave but all other occupiers of flats safely remain in their respective dwellings unless directly affected by heat and/or smoke (or directed to leave by the fire and rescue service).
- If you live in a high rise property you are not at more risk of a fire starting. The advice from West Midlands Fire Service is that people who live in high rise properties/purpose built flats or maisonettes, aside from having a smoke alarm in your flat and taking fire safety precautions; make sure you know your escape route and what to do if there is a fire inside your home or somewhere else in the building.