

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 West 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 information from Lambeth Fire Service supports the “Stay Put Policy” for our properties and this remains valid and in place.

Crew Manager Stapley said “If buildings are built and maintained correctly, walls, floors and doors in flats and maisonettes give you protection from fire – a minimum of 30 to 60 minutes – so, if there is a fire elsewhere in the building but not inside your home you're usually safer staying in your flat unless heat or smoke is affecting you. Stay put and call 999. If you leave your flat you could be rushing into smoke, the fire itself or firefighters using equipment to bring the fire under control in another part of the building”

As a reminder of the investment in London:-

- Fire Risk Assessments were completed in the London area for low and medium-rise purpose-built blocks of flats in February 2014 as there are no high-rise properties in the Watmos London stock
- Following the Fire Risk Assessments being completed, there were a number of works identified that were required to be completed that would improve fire safety. Much of these works were delivered in conjunction with major works across the London estates with communal works being delivered as a programme to ensure compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- There were full action plans created for each TMO that were monitored through the works so as to ensure that the action points were completed with all works being signed off
- During the last 2 to 3 years of major works investment hard wired smoke alarms have been installed in conjunction with the installation of kitchen and bathroom programmes with installation programmes continuing through 2017/18

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.

WATMOS and your TMO would also like 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 the 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.