

Brandrams Housing Co-op
Fire Safety Policy and Procedures

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Fire Policy and Procedures

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1. Policy statement

Brandrams Housing Co-op (BHC) will comply with its legal duties to:

- Minimise the risks of the *start* of fire
- Minimise the risks of the *spread* of fire
- Ensure adequate fire detection and alarm equipment is in place
- Ensure adequate escape routes are available, and provide any assistance needed (such as signs and lighting)
- Provide approved fire-fighting equipment in flats and communal areas
- Ensure all residents are aware of their role in the prevention and event of a fire

2. The law

BHC must comply with:

- *The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005* (FSO) which applies to common parts of the block including the office, boiler room and laundry room. Fire Risk Assessments are made in accordance with this legislation
- *The Housing Act 2004*, which applies to individual flats and common areas of the block. Fire safety is just one of a range of hazard prevention issues outlined in this legislation

Any details or queries not covered by this policy must be referred to the relevant legislation

3. Useful documents and records

The entire FSO can be accessed at www.legislation.gov.uk

In the office are paper copies of:

- '*Fire Safety in purpose-built block of flats*' published by Local Government Group 2011, which outlines how the FSO applies to Brandrams as a landlord
- *Fire Log Book*, which records all inspections and testing of equipment
- *Fire Risk Assessments*, which highlight any action needed for achieving fire safety standards
- *Fire Safety file*, which stores fire safety meeting minutes and notes from Fire Wardens

4. Responsibilities

Management Committee

The FSO requires that the Responsible Person (RP)¹ has overall responsibility for fire safety. This includes the actions of contractors acting on behalf of BHC. The RP is required to ensure that adequate resources are allocated to managing fire safety, including:

- Formulating, applying and reviewing fire safety policy and procedures
- Conducting assessments and reviews to ensure that safety standards are being met
- Maintaining up to date property files and building plans that can be handed to the Fire Rescue Service
- Ensuring sufficient information, instruction and training is carried out in relation to fire safety

¹ Overall responsibility for ensuring BHC complies with legislation and liability for prosecutions falls to the Responsible Person (RP) ie 'the person who has control of the premises'. Commonly among Housing Co-ops, the entire serving Management Committee collectively are the RP.

- Monitoring the performance of contractors
- Ensuring that residents, members of the public, staff and contractors are not unnecessarily exposed to risk
- Investigating any fires and introducing controls to reduce the risk of such incidents recurring

Management Committee should nominate one of their members to be the Fire Safety Coordinator – the main point of contact for all fire safety issues. This person does not have additional legal liability but will ensure fire safety policy and procedures are being adhered to.

To assist the Fire Safety Coordinator, two Co-op members should be nominated and trained as Fire Wardens
(For role descriptions see Appendix A)

Tenants/Members

At the time of receiving their BHC tenancy agreement and terms of lease, tenants must be made aware of:

- what to do in the event of a fire
- rules in relation to preventing fire such as no-smoking areas, storage of flammable materials
- rules about storing personal items along emergency exit routes

It must be made clear that tenants may not make any material alterations to the structure of their flat without the express formal permission of BHC

NB. appendices A & B of the Fire Risk Assessment can be used to provide information for management and residents

Contractors

This policy is to be read in conjunction with BHC's Code of Conduct for Contractors. The Code includes contractors to conduct their own Health & Safety risk assessment before. Contractors are required to report any fire risk concerns to BHC.

5. 'Stay Put' policy

It is not suitable for BHC to have a policy of whole-building evacuation in the event of a fire as this would involve record keeping of who is in the building, whole-building alarm systems, marshalling responsibilities and regular evacuation tests.

Each flat is surrounded by high standard fire-resisting walls and floors to reduce the risk of fire spreading to other parts of the building. Those in flats remote from the fire are safe to stay where they are.

The Stay Put policy requires that tenants are made aware of the following procedures:

- When a fire occurs within a flat, the occupants alert others in the flat, make their way out of the building and summon the Fire and Rescue Service
- If a fire starts in the common parts, anyone in these areas makes their way out of the building and summons the Fire and Rescue Service
- All other residents not directly affected by the fire would be expected to 'stay put' and remain in their flat unless directed to leave by the Fire and Rescue Service

It is not implied that those who wish to leave the building should be prevented from doing so. Nor does it mean that those evacuating a flat that has a fire cannot stop to alert their neighbours so that they can also escape if they feel threatened.

More detail about Stay Put policy and building maintenance standards that are required can be found in Part B '*Fire Safety in purpose-built block of flats*'

6. Fire Risk Assessments

Professional Fire Risk Assessments (FRA) will be undertaken on behalf of the RP to consider our fire precaution measures as defined in the FSO. Principally, in relation to blocks of flats these are:

- Measures to reduce the risk and spread of fire
- Means of escape and that escape routes are safe and effective
- An emergency plan including procedures in the event of fire
- Measures to mitigate the effects of fire
- Effectiveness of alarms and fire extinguishing equipment

All communal areas will have a professional FRA completed by a competent person every three years. In the interim, an in-house review should be completed annually, using the Fire Risk Assessment Guide provided at the back of the FRA.

Management Committee will oversee any required actions to ensure we comply with fire safety standards, with the help of a temporary sub-committee if necessary.

A professional Risk Assessment will also be undertaken:

- Following a fire
- Following a 'near miss'
- Following the introduction of a significant risk (e.g. persons with impairment)
- Following any works affecting the general fire precautions in the common areas

For more detailed information about the purpose and scope of the FRA, see Part D in '*Fire Safety in purpose-built block of flats*'

7. Equipment, Testing and Record keeping

Fire fighting equipment

Fire extinguishers are installed and maintained on the corridors of each floor and in high risk areas such as the bin store and laundry. The Fire Service do not generally approve of extinguishers in communal areas as they are seen to encourage heroism or can result in the wrong type of extinguisher being used. It should be made clear to residents that fire extinguishers in communal areas are not to be used in the event of a fire inside an individual flat.

Fire extinguishers and fire blankets are installed and maintained in the kitchen of each communal flat. All fire fighting equipment will be checked annually or in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.

Dry Risers

Dry Risers, both near the lift and outside flats, will be inspected regularly and in accordance with the risk rating of the building to ensure that they remain in good working order. In addition, an independent inspection will be carried out of the dry risers and fire hydrants according to the relevant standard.

Monthly fire checks will include checking that dry riser cupboards are not being used to store personal items.

Fire Alarm Systems

Individual heat and smoke alarms will be tested regularly. Tenants must allow access for testing or sign a form to say they will test the alarm themselves. Residents and guests must not interfere or cover heat or smoke detectors

Emergency lighting

The corridors, courtyard and roof have an automatic back-up lighting system if the electricity fails. This system should be checked regularly (green lights indicate in working order) and fully tested every 6 months.

Purchasing furniture and furnishings

All furniture and furnishings provided for communal areas and the living room of shared flats must be labelled fire-retardant to the standard revised in 1997 legislation

Record-keeping

The Fire Log will keep details of the inspections, testing and maintenance that has been carried out on fire safety systems and equipment

Brandrams Housing Co-op
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Appendix A

Fire Safety Coordinator
(Management Committee Member)

Role Description


- Be aware of existing fire safety legislation and how it applies to Brandrams
- Be aware of maintenance, works, checks and tests being carried out in relation to fire safety standards
- Ensure Fire Risk Assessments are booked and carried out when due and that recommendations are followed through. This may require setting up a temporary working group of volunteer members
- Bring all fire safety issues to the attention of Management Committee, including the monthly report by Fire Wardens

Fire Warden x 2
(Any Co-op member)

Role Description

- Carry out monthly checks throughout the building, checking equipment and looking for hazards relating to fire safety
- Record findings and any actions taken to the Fire Safety Officer

Brandrams Wharf
Fire Warden Monthly Checks

Date:		By who	Problems found and any action taken
<u>Laundry</u> Powder extinguisher Lint build up Plugs and cables Obstacles to exit			
<u>Plant Room</u> Powder extinguisher General check for rubbish			
<u>Common Room</u> Water extinguisher Smoke detector Obstacles to exit			
<u>Bin Store</u> CO2 extinguisher Flammable materials Both doors closed			
<u>Courtyard</u> 2 x powder extinguishers Emergency lighting Passageways to flats Corridors 90cm clear Stairwell Exit to street secured			
<u>1st Floor</u> Stairwell clear Powder extinguisher Passageways to flats Corridors 90cm clear Riser clear			
<u>2nd Floor</u> Stairwell clear Powder extinguisher Passageways to flats Corridors 90cm clear Riser clear			

<u>3rd Floor</u> Stairwell clear Powder extinguisher Passageways to flats Corridors 90cm clear Riser clear			
<u>4th Floor</u> Stairwell clear Powder extinguisher Passageways to flats Corridors 90cm clear Riser clear			
<u>Roof Garden</u> C3479Y Emergency lighting Obstacles from skylights to exit			