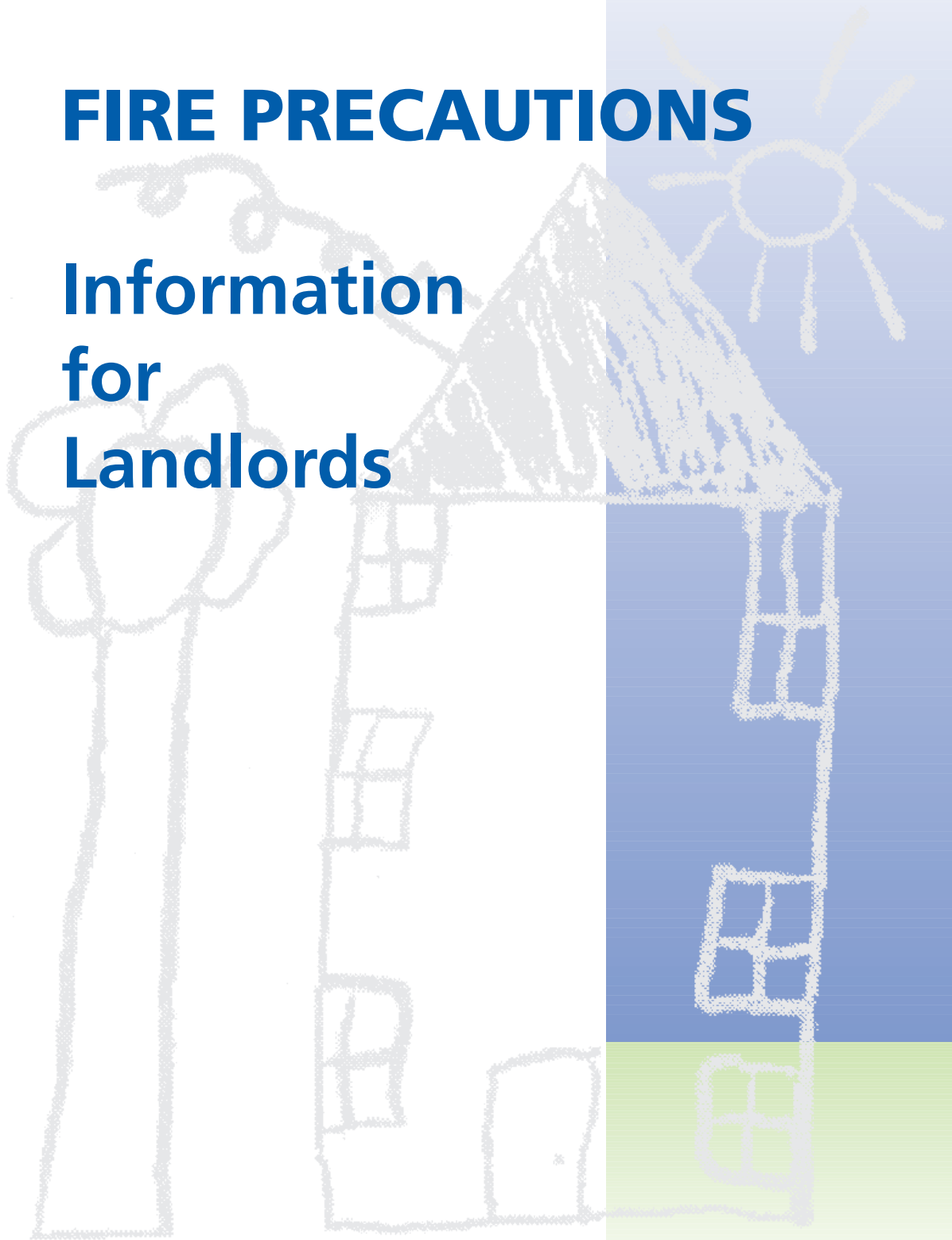


# FIRE PRECAUTIONS

## Information for Landlords



Residential team

Housing Services  
Civic Centre  
44 York Street  
Twickenham  
TW1 3BZ



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# Guidance Notes for Means of Escape in Case of Fire

These notes are intended as guidance for Landlords and Builders as to the minimum requirement for Means of Escape from Fire in Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs). If there are any doubts as to the construction details or the owners' responsibilities you should either refer to the appropriate British Standard, manufacturers recommendations or contact the Residential Services Section of Social Services and Housing Department (020 8891 7892/3/4/6).

## Introduction

As with means of escape from fire any building, it is important the occupants are alerted to the fire and vacate the building quickly and safely. Occupants must leave the building via a 'Protected Route'. This includes stairs, corridors and landings what lead to a final point of exit from the building. The protected route must resist smoke and the fire for at least 30 minutes to provide time for all occupants to escape safely.

## Doors

Doors that lead on to a protected route must have a minimum fire resistance of not less than 30 minutes. Such doors shall comply with British Standard 476-6:1989. Solid wood doors of not less than 44mm thickness will only be accepted where their performance has been validated and certificated by a competent person. Where existing doors do not meet the fire resistance criteria, it is the policy of the Authority to require the installation of new door sets (i.e. door & frame) to meet the current British Standard (BS476). Only in exceptional circumstances and after approval from the London Fire and Emergency Defence Authority (LFEPA) will the upgrading of an existing door be permitted. Such circumstances are for reasons of architectural or historical interest and will require written proof of the need to retain the door from the appropriate Authority (Head of Planning and Building Control or English Heritage).

## Door frames

The Manufacturer's test or assessment report for the door leaf must be consulted and the specification for the frame noted. If the existing door frame fails to meet the specification then the frame must be modified accordingly to meet the specification. If, on inspection, the frame is found to be warped, split, twisted, no longer square or not properly seated, then it must be replaced. If the frame is sound and square, then all voids and gaps between it and the wall or partition must be filled with intumescent mastic or paste. The architrave is then to be re-fixed and bedded in intumescent mastic or paste and screwed and glued back onto the frame. The new door leaf is to be hung in the frame using ironmongery which is identical to that quoted in the assessment report.

## Leaf/frame gap

Gaps around the door and its frame shall not exceed that specified in the Test Report (generally 4mm NOT including the smoke seal), The recommended maximum gap at the threshold is 8mm (BS8214:1990).

## **Door stops Intumescent smoke strips and seals**

Smoke and intumescent heat seals must be fitted to the door. With these, door stops need only be of sufficient dimensions to retain the door in the mechanical sense.

Intumescent strips and cold smoke seals are required to both edges and to the head of the door in all cases and must be tested against British Standard 476:Part 22:1987. They are NOT required at the threshold. These are to be fitted centrally in the door edge or in the corresponding position within the frame. They may be glued in a groove or fixed with panel pins. The material used must be identical to that specified in the assessment report. Strips and seals must NEVER be painted over.

## **Hinges**

Hinges shall be selected to perform in accordance with EN1935:2002. Hinges shall be non combustible with a melting point of not less than 800oC. They shall be at least 100mm long and with a width to suit the thickness of the door (generally 75mm wide). The door shall be hung on 3 hinges. Rising butt hinges shall NOT be used.

## **Self closing devices**

The self closer must be so effective as to ensure the door is held firmly in a closed position. Products conforming with EN1154:1997 shall be used. Rising Butt hinges and 'Gibraltar' type closers are NOT acceptable.

## **Door locks**

All doors to have locks that operate without the use of a key from the accommodation side e.g. thumb turn locks. Locks and latches shall comply with EN12209:2003.

## **Ceilings**

Ceilings shall give 30 minutes resistance to BS476, for example, 12.5mm plasterboard securely fixed with joints filled and taped. Other methods and materials are acceptable if they comply with the British Standard and Approved Document B of the Building Regulations 2000 with associated amendments. Ceilings under protected routes including the soffits to cupboards under the stairs and ceilings between residential accommodation are included. The ceiling of a protected route immediately below a roof space shall also be protected. Any loft access in the protected route will also need to have fire resistance of at least 30 minutes. In some circumstances, a fire resisting standard of 60 minutes will be required. For example, when separating commercial and residential parts of the building.

## **Walls/partitions/ screens**

Partitions shall give 30 minutes fire resistance to BS476, partition between residential accommodation and walls enclosing a protected route are included. In some circumstances, a fire resisting standard of 60 minutes will be required, for example, when separating commercial and residential parts of the building. New partitions to be a minimum equivalent of 75mm x 50mm at maximum 600mm centres finished timber studding, faced on both sides with suitable thickness to ensure compliance with British Standards.

## Glazing

Glazing in the staircase enclosure must be of a minimum 30 minute fire resisting quality and comply with British Standard BS476 part 22. Fire resisting glazing is dependent upon good installation practice for its performance. It is therefore, important to obtain expert advice on the installation method and type of materials to be used. Pre-glazed doors or partitions from the manufacture should be accompanied by an assessment report. In general, the framing members must be hard wood or good quality softwood of dimensions, 75mm x 63mm. Beading material must be hardwood of dimensions, 20mm x not less than 15mm high at the glass interface.

## Automatic fire detection system

The purpose of an Automatic Fire Detection (AFD) system is to provide a reliable and constant means of detecting the presence of fire and/or smoke at the earliest possible stage in order to provide an early warning to all occupiers to evacuate the building. All HMOs require an AFD system that complies with the British Standard BS5839: Part 6: 2004. The type of system installed is dependent on the potential risk of fire in the property. The risk assessment will include such factors as the size of the property and the number of occupants. All systems will include smoke detectors (to British Standard BS5446) and /or Heat Detectors (to British Standard 5445). The detectors are linked so that if smoke or heat is detected in one area, the alarm will sound in all other areas of the property. Past experience has shown that in many instances sounders in the common parts cannot be satisfactorily heard in the individual rooms and often do not reach the required level of 75db[A] [decibels] at the bed head with the door closed. It is therefore recommended that dual detector and sound alarms be installed in rooms in addition to sounders in the common parts. Single point battery operated, smoke detectors on their own are not acceptable. The system must be certificated upon installation, tested at regular intervals and results recorded in a log book held on the premises.

## Emergency lighting

Depending on the size of the HMO, Emergency Lighting may be required and shall be installed in accordance with British Standard BS5266: Part 1: 2005. Luminaries, placed in the protected route, are activated in the event of failure of ordinary staircase lighting. The emergency lighting must remain on for a period of three hours. The system must be certificated upon installation, tested at regular intervals and results recorded in a log book held on the premises.

## Fire Extinguishers

All HMOs will require the provision of the fire fighting equipment. The type and numbers of extinguishers will depend on the size of the Property. All HMOs will require at least one water extinguisher, one Carbon Dioxide extinguisher and a fire blanket for each other kitchen.