

Fire Safety in Flats

We take the issue of fire safety in our blocks of flats very seriously. If you have any concerns about fire safety in your flat or block, please email us on info@lyha.co.uk or call us on 0113 278 3335.

How we manage fire risk

If you live in a block of flats, fire safety guidance is available in common areas such as in corridors and stairways and on our website www.lyha.co.uk

Over recent years, we have been carrying out health and safety / fire safety improvements at many of our blocks of flats identified through fire risk assessment recommendations. This work includes improving and installing fire safety signs in common areas, upgrading and installing new emergency lighting, installing new fire doors and closers to flats, strengthening fire resistance in cupboards and service ducts to prevent the spread of smoke and fire and ensure that any fire is contained, and that the escape routes are kept safe.

We also inspect our blocks of flats regularly to identify and deal with any repairs of fire safety issues.

Our Annual Fire Risk assessments are carried out for us by competent and experienced fire consultants. The fire risk assessments support a 'stay put' policy in many of our properties as being the most appropriate type of policy for the size, construction and nature of the building. It eliminates unwanted evacuations for such minor events such as burnt toast etc. and helps prevent risk of injury which could occur when negotiating the often steep staircases etc. It also prevents the inhalation of smoke if there is any percolating into the common parts, and prevents any undue stress, which is particularly important with many of our older customers. Staying put in your flat is both safe and secure and allows the fire and rescue service to access a block quickly to deal with the fire, and decide if they need to evacuate anybody. Your block has been assessed to ensure that it supports this policy and that it is the right one for it.

This Stay Put approach is used mainly in purpose built blocks of flats, and not usually in older buildings that have been converted into flats.

How can you help keep safe?

- Be aware of the fire safety guidance for your block
- Keep escape routes (communal corridors and stairs) clear of personal belongings or rubbish
- Check the self-closing device on your front door - tell us about any problems or repairs
- Check the smoke detectors in your flat **weekly** and replace batteries if necessary

Flats with a "Stay Put" policy

If you are not directly affected by a fire it is usually safe to delay your evacuation and remain in the comparative safety of your flat, unless you are told otherwise.

This stay put type of fire safety policy is typically used for blocks of flats that are custom built (more modern) which **do not** have a fire detection and warning system (fire alarm) fitted in the common area or one that is linked the detection within the flats. You will have a smoke detector fitted in your own flat.

If you live in a block of flats with a 'Stay Put' policy, the structure of the flat and the block itself – walls, floors, ceilings and doors – is designed to contain a fire and provide appropriate protection. That is unless the fire starts in your flat, in which case you should leave as quickly as possible. Rest assured that we have checked to ensure that all of our blocks meet the criteria, and are as safe as can reasonably be expected.

A 'Stay put' policy follows simple guidelines: If there is a fire in your building but not inside your own flat, then it is usually safer for you to stay in your flat unless the heat or smoke from the fire starts to affect you. When fire fighters arrive on the scene, subject to the situation confronting them, the stay put advice may be upheld, reinforced or changed depending on the nature and development of the fire, the building and the occupants.

Fire in a flat

If there is a fire in your flat then you **MUST** leave immediately, closing the door behind you to prevent the ingress of air/oxygen and to prevent the fire spreading into the corridor.

If there is a lot of smoke in the flat, crawl along the floor where the air should be clearer and the temperature lower. Always use stairs rather than a lift unless it is a 'disabled type' which has been specifically designed for the purpose. When you are in a safe place raise the alarm by calling the Fire and Rescue Service (999).

Some residents in surrounding flats on the same floor, may also wish to evacuate if they have any concerns about their own safety. This is acceptable but entirely at their own risk, and entirely their own choice under the circumstances.

The remainder of the building's occupants are safe to remain in their flats, unless directed to leave by the Fire and Rescue Service. If you 'stay put' because of a fire elsewhere in the building, then there is no harm in you dialling 999 to call the fire and rescue service, or ringing 112 for advice. It is better to duplicate the call to the fire service than them not to be called at all. This applies equally to the other emergency services.

Fire in a common area

In the unlikely event of a fire occurring in a common area, anyone in that area should leave the building immediately. If there is a lot of smoke in the corridor, crawl along the floor where the air should be clearer and the temperature lower. Always use stairs rather than a lift. When in a safe place raise the alarm by calling the Fire and Rescue Service.

Some residents in surrounding flats may also wish to evacuate if they have any concerns about their own safety.

The remainder of the building's occupants are usually safe to remain in their flats, unless directed to leave by the Fire Service. If you 'stay put' you should still immediately call 999 or 112 for advice and to ensure that the fire and rescue service along with other emergency services have been notified.

Flats with an "evacuation" policy (get out and stay out)

If your block is affected by a fire you should not delay your evacuation and you should evacuate the building immediately.

This evacuation type of fire safety policy is typically used for blocks of flats that do not, or cannot follow a 'Stay Put' policy. These are normally not custom built (more modern) blocks of flats, but are older properties that have been converted into flats.

When a fire happens in this type of building (in a flat or a common area) a fire detection and warning system (fire alarm) will sound, alerting you to the fire and the need to evacuate the building- "get out and stay out".