



Fire Safety Policy

Last reviewed November 2018

1.0 Fire Safety Policy

overview

This policy is managed and adhered to by the housing service. This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure compliance with government legislation, guidance and good practice.

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1.1 Introduction

As a landlord, Dacorum Borough Council (DBC) sees the health and safety of people living, working in or visiting our properties as a priority.

Under the Housing Act 2004 and the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, we have a responsibility to ensure certain safety standards are met and adhered to. This policy will outline our approach to managing fire safety in properties which are owned and managed by DBC's housing service.

The Council is required to respond to any local or national restrictions imposed by central government. The administration of this and other Council policies could, therefore, be impacted by a pandemic or other emergency for the period that such restrictions are in operation.

1.2 Aim(s) of the policy:

The aims of this policy are to;

- Ensure the safety of all people living, working in or visiting properties owned by the housing service;
- Ensure alignment and adherence to current legislation and government policy on fire safety; and
- Provide an overview of our approach to ensuring fire safety within our properties.

1.3 Links to Council's corporate aims:

This policy supports the council's corporate priorities which are set out in ['Delivering for Dacorum – Corporate Plan 2015-2020'](#).

1.4 Equality and diversity

The council is committed to promoting equality of opportunity in housing services and has procedures in place to ensure that all Applicants and Tenants are treated fairly and without unlawful discrimination.

1.5 Policy Statement(s)

We ensure that all required properties have an up to date fire risk assessment (see 2.2).

We carry out annual servicing checks to all properties with gas installations and appliances.

Tenants occupying our properties must allow access for these checks (see 2.3).

We enforce a 'no tolerance' approach in order to ensure fire safety in communal areas (see 2.4).

We offer up to date guidance on evacuation plans for tenants living in our communal blocks in the event of a fire (see 2.5).

We will carry out a phased programme of updates to fire detection equipment in our properties (see 2.6).

We ensure that staff are trained to the appropriate level to ensure competency in their role (see 2.7).

There is guidance available for tenants and leaseholders on all aspects of fire safety (see 2.8).

We liaise regularly with Hertfordshire Fire Services to ensure fire safety concerns are addressed effectively (see 2.9).

2.0 Fire Safety Policy detail

2.1) Building Regulations and Equipment

We ensure that our properties are safe for anyone living, visiting or working in them. We will ensure that, to the extent appropriate, premises are equipped with fire detectors, alarms and sufficient firefighting equipment. Any equipment provided will be easily accessible, simple to use and indicated by clear signs. All equipment will be maintained effectively and in good repair to ensure efficient working order.

We enforce a 'no tolerance' approach (see 2.4) to ensure that routes to emergency exits as well as the exits themselves are kept clear at all times to allow quick and safe evacuations to take place when required.

2.2) Risk Assessments

We ensure effective planning, control and monitoring of preventative and protective measures to address fire risk in DBC owned and managed properties. All communal blocks will receive an updated fire risk assessment as follows:

Priority Category 1 (E.g. high rise blocks of flats and large supported schemes)	Annually
Priority Category 2 (E.g. medium rise blocks of flats and dispersed supported schemes)	Once every 3 years

Priority Category 3 (E.g. low rise blocks of flats)	Once every 5 years
Priority Category 4 (E.g. blocks of flats without internal communal areas)	As required (low risk)

The fire risk assessment will be reviewed earlier in the event of:

- An incident or 'near miss'; or
- Any works or new processes which impact the means of escape or alarm system.

We will ensure that once the assessment has been carried out or reviewed, the following information will be recorded:

- Significant findings of assessment or review;
- Measures which have been or will be taken to remove or reduce the risk from fire; and
- Any group of persons identified by the assessment as being specifically at risk.

This will be done as soon as is practicable after the assessment has been carried out.

2.3) Gas and Electricity Safety

DBC has a legal requirement to ensure that all properties we own with gas installations and appliances comply with the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998.

As a landlord, we are legally obliged to check any gas installations and service appliances which fall under our responsibility on an annual basis. Tenants are required to meet their tenancy agreement by allowing us access to their home in order for these checks to be carried out.

If at any point you suspect a gas leak, you should immediately call the National Grid **0800 111 999** to report this.

Leaseholders are responsible for making sure their own boiler and gas appliances are safe and our partners, SunRealm, offer a discounted rate for this service to council leaseholders. More information on this is available on our [website](#).

Whenever a property becomes vacant, we ensure that it has received an up-to-date electrical safety certificate before it is re-let. Wherever possible, all redundant wiring will also be safely removed. Any electrical installations in communal areas are inspected and tested on a 5-yearly basis. In line with the Electrical Safety Council's most recent guidance, we will also ensure that a qualified electrician carries out periodic inspections and electrical tests at least every 5 years.

2.4) Communal Areas and Lofts

A number of our properties come with shared use of communal areas. These may include:

- Entrance and communal landings;
- Lounges (in supported housing schemes);
- Stairways and balconies;
- Shared gardens and access paths.

As a landlord, we have a responsibility to ensure that these areas are kept safe and that residents can exit the building quickly and safely in the case of an emergency. To achieve this we ask that residents keep communal areas completely clear of their belongings or waste and take a 'zero tolerance' approach to enforcing this.

Smoking and/or vaping is not permitted in any internal communal areas, or within 10 metres of any doors or windows. Tenants and leaseholders must not use items to prop open communal fire doors.

2.0 Fire Safety Policy detail

Loft spaces within blocks of flats are not to be used for the storage of possessions or accessed by tenants unless they have requested access and written permission has been given by the housing service. Entering any loft or roof space or storing things here may cause damage to the insulation, cause a fire risk or pose a hazard to staff carrying out repairs and maintenance in these areas.

2.5) Evacuation Plan for Communal Blocks

The safety of residents living in our communal blocks is important to us. We ensure that up to date fire safety guidance, which is tailored to the type of block you live in, is readily available. These provide you with advice on how to act in the event of a fire if you live in:

- [A block of flats with a lift;](#)
- [A block of flats without a lift;](#)
- [A supported housing scheme;](#) or
- [A temporary accommodation property.](#)

2.6) Fire detection in dwellings

We understand that effective fire detection equipment is crucial to ensuring quick and safe escape from a property in the event of a fire. The following information describes the standards we meet in terms of fire detection equipment on properties owned and managed by DBC.

Houses and flats

- All tenants given the opportunity to have fire detection installed to an LD3 standard; and
- Properties will be upgraded to LD2 when they become empty or a rewire is required.

Flats in high rise blocks and supported housing schemes

- All properties will be upgraded, at minimum, to an LD2 fire detection system (phased programme).

LD3 refers to smoke detection covering escape routes e.g. hallways and landings. LD2 refers to smoke detection covering escape routes and high risk areas e.g. hallways, landings, living room and kitchen.

Tenants must not tamper with or remove any fire detection equipment in their homes (e.g. smoke detectors, sprinklers etc.) and should carry out regular tests to ensure they are working. If you would like to know when your property is due for an upgrade, please email compliance@dacorum.gov.uk

2.7) Staff Training

All staff that are involved in any way with fire risk assessments or fire prevention actions, receive training every three years, to a suitable and appropriate standard by a competent person. This ensures that necessary tasks can be undertaken effectively and proficiently.

2.8) Guidance for tenants

Guidance regarding fire safety in the home is offered to tenants when they sign up to their new tenancy. This guidance is available on our [website](#).

There are also a number of [fire safety guidance](#) documents available on central government's website, covering numerous aspects of fire safety, including some specific guidance for vulnerable groups.

Fire safety concerns can be reported as a repair [online](#) or by phone **0800 018 6050**.

A repair reported that is considered to be causing a health and safety risk will be treated as an emergency and carried out within 4 hours of it being reported.

If you are planning on carrying out an alteration or improvement to your home, you must [request permission](#) for this. This allows us to ensure that any work is being carried out appropriately and is keeping the health and safety of your household, your neighbours and any visitors to your home in mind.

2.9) Liaison with Fire Services

As a local authority, we work closely and meet regularly with a number of public services e.g. the police and fire services as part of the Dacorum Community Safety Partnership. This is where local issues can be discussed and addressed, including fire-related crime.

Hertfordshire Fire Services also offer free ['safe and well' visits](#) to your home, where they will check existing smoke detectors are correctly sited and working, as well as offer advice and guidance on all aspects of fire safety.

2.10) Roles and Responsibilities

Operational responsibility for DBC's Housing Service adherence to this fire safety policy lies with the Assistant Director for Housing. Overall accountability lies with the Chief Executive of Dacorum Borough Council.

Responsibility for carrying out the programme of fire risk assessments and maintaining up to date records of this falls to the Risk, Compliance and Health & Safety Officer. The Compliance, Mechanical & Electrical Team Leader oversees and holds accountability for this.

All employees of DBC have a responsibility to, where safe and possible to do so, reduce, remove and/or report hazards that present a risk of fire occurring.

3.0

Links to other corporate documents

This policy links to and should be read in conjunction with the following policies and strategies:

- Safety in Communal Areas Policy
- Gas Safety Policy
- Solid Fuel Policy
- Alterations & Improvement Policy
- DBC Tenancy Agreement
- DBC Tenants Handbook

4.0

Legislation

The legislation listed below will be taken into consideration when implementing this policy:

- Housing Act 1985
- Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations
- 1998
- The Building Regulations 2000 Approved
- Document B (Fire Safety)
- Housing Act 2004: Part 1
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Equalities Act 2010
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)