Fire Safety

Keeping you and your family safe in your home

Ashford Borough Council



Fire Safety & Stay Put Policy Fire Safety Measures in Your Home

Electrical Inspections: The electrical system in your home is inspected every five years and upgraded as needed to meet current safety standards.

Emergency Lighting: Installed in communal areas to provide illumination during an evacuation. Regularly tested and maintained.

Flat Entrance Fire Doors: Maintained to ensure they function correctly in the event of a fire. These doors protect communal areas and allow safe escape routes.

Fire Risk Assessments: Conducted in communal areas of flats and sheltered housing to identify hazards and implement safety measures.

Fire Extinguishers: Where provided in communal areas, these are inspected and serviced annually. They should only be used by trained individuals to control small fires while awaiting emergency services.

Fire policy: Fire evacuation strategies will be determined on a building-by-building basis, these will be displayed in the entrance hall to your building and or in your home.

Stay Put Policy

- For residents in a block of flats, the "Stay Put" policy is designed to keep you safer in the event of a fire. This policy means that unless the fire is in your own flat or a direct threat to you, you should remain inside your home with doors and windows closed until the emergency services arrive and provide instructions.

Why Stay Put?

- Modern flats are built to high fire safety standards, with walls and fire doors designed to contain fires.
- Evacuating unnecessarily can put you at greater risk from smoke and fire in communal areas.
- Firefighters can respond more effectively when corridors and stairwells are clear of unnecessary movement.

When to Evacuate?

- If the fire is in your own flat, leave immediately, closing doors behind you.
- If smoke or fire directly affects your flat, leave safely if you can.
- Always follow the advice of emergency services if instructed to evacuate.

Escape Plan & Communal Area Safety

- Think ahead; make an escape plan so that everyone in your home knows what to do in the event of a fire.
- Take everyone into account when making your plan - it is important to think about any chil-dren, the elderly or people with particular needs who may require extra help to get out.
- Make sure you know where keys to any doors or windows are. (Never use a window to es-cape if you live
- in high-rise block – unless advised and assisted by the Emergency Services)
- Keep all routes clear of anything that may hinder your escape, like furniture, clothing, prams, bicycles and ensure there are no loose floor coverings that could present a trip haz-ard.

Communal Areas

- Communal passageways and stairways form part of the escape routes for everyone in your block. What you do in the communal areas will affect other residents.
- Ensure they are always clear of items such as rubbish bags, prams, bicycles, mobility scooters or furniture. These may block your exit and emit toxic smoke/gasses during a fire.
- Always report items blocking exits and your route of escape to the Housing Repairs Team.
- Never wedge open fire doors. These are designed to close behind you and effectively slow the spread of smoke and fire.
- Ensure you keep meter cupboard doors closed and cupboards are free of flammable items.

Flat Entrance Doors and Communal Doors (FIRE DOORS)

- When a fire occurs, it is essential that it is not allowed to spread. Fire doors are designed to resist the spread of fire and smoke and provide a safe route out of the building. If you are staying put, a fire door creates a safe place to wait until the fire ser-vice arrive. To ensure that fire doors are fitted and working correctly they need to be checked and inspected regularly.

Residents also have a responsibility to make sure:

- Any faults or Damage are reported immediately.
- Fire doors should be kept shut when not in use.
- Residents or their guests should not tamper with self-closing devices.
- Do not fix anything to the Fire door or its Frame, this includes doorbells (Ring or similar) cameras. security lighting or key safes.
- You need to ensure that other services providers Cables such as for cable TV or sky do not penetrate or damage the fire door or frame, with cable penetrations.
- If in doubt, please contact ABC Housing Repairs Team before the installation proceeds.
- Once every 12 months ABC will need to visit your flat to carry out a thorough inspection of the front door. The inspection is a legal requirement, and we need your help to en-sure that it happens on time.
- The inspector will need to check both sides of the door, ensure that it closes properly and is free from damage. They will also arrange repairs for any defects they find (if you are a leasehold resident we will advise you if any repairs or improvements are required to your front door).
- We will write to you with an appointment and reminder about the inspection in plenty of time to rearrange if needed but remember that you can report any issues with our front door by calling ABC/ Repairs / Request a repair.

Fire Safety Tips

Smoke Alarms

- Test at least once a month.
- Report any faults or low battery warnings to the Housing Repairs Team.
- Never remove or tamper with your smoke alarm.

Smoking & Candles

- Never leave lit cigarettes, candles, or incense burners unattended.
- Always extinguish them properly and keep them away from flammable materials.
- Avoid smoking in bed and store matches and lighters out of children's reach.

Kitchen Safety

- Prefer dry or air fryers over deep fat fryers for safer cooking.
- Never leave cooking unattended or allow fat to build up in ovens or grills.
- Do not use water on oil fires; instead, turn off the burner and cover with a lid.
- Keep toasters clean and away from flammable objects.

BBQs & Open Fires

- Never use BBQs on balconies or near buildings, fences, or trees.
- Use firelighters instead of flammable liquids.
- Keep children and pets away from BBQs and never leave them unattended.

Electrical Safety

- Watch for signs of faulty wiring, such as flickering lights or scorched plugs.
- Use appliances as per manufacturer instructions and turn them off after use.
- Avoid overloading sockets and always use original chargers and cables.

Escape Plan & Communal Area Safety

- Know your escape plan and ensure all household members understand it.
- Keep communal passageways clear of obstacles.
- Report any obstructions or fire door issues to the Housing Repairs Team.
- Never wedge open fire doors; they are designed to slow fire and smoke spread.

Fire Sprinklers (If installed)

- Sprinkler systems activate at high temperatures to control small fires.
- Never tamper with, obstruct, or paint over sprinkler heads.

Balconies

- Never use BBQs or store flammable items on your balcony.
- Do not use your balcony as an escape route unless it is officially designated for that purpose.

In Case of Fire

- Know the evacuation procedure for your building.
- Follow the instructions on the Fire Action Notice in communal areas.
- If a fire occurs in your flat, alert others, leave, and close doors behind you.
- Never use lifts; use the stairs.
- Call 999 once safely outside.
- If trapped, stay inside with doors and windows closed, and wait for fire services.

By following these guidelines and understanding the Stay Put policy, you can help ensure the safety of yourself, your family, and your neighbours.

Always provide access to maintenance and service contractors responsible for electrical safety.

Report all faults and repairs immediately to:

✉ **housing.compliance@ashford.gov.uk**

☎ **01233 331111**