

FIRE & SAFETY BULLETIN

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DEADLINES FOR UNSAFE CLADDING REMOVAL SET BY GOVERNMENT

Thousands of buildings wrapped in unsafe cladding are set to be remediated on a faster basis thanks to new legislation. The Government has published a joint plan with the social housing sector to accelerate remediation across England, as well as setting out plans for a new law as part of the second phase of the Remediation Acceleration Plan.

At the heart of the joint plan on social housing remediation is a commitment by Government to invest over £1 billion to give social landlords access to Government funding schemes in the same way as private building owners.

As part of this work, housing associations, local authorities and regulators are committing to accelerate work to assess and fix social housing and to improve support to social

WHAT IS ARTICLE 14 OF THE FIRE SAFETY ORDER (RRFSO) 2005?

Under Article 14 the “routes to emergency exits from premises and the exits themselves are kept clear at all times” and that these “emergency routes and exits must lead as directly as possible to a place of safety”.



tenants before, during and after remediation works. The legislation, which will be brought forward as soon as the Parliamentary timetable allows, is going to require landlords overseeing buildings of 18 metres or more in height with unsafe cladding to complete remediation work by the end of 2029 and those landlords of buildings of 11-18 metres in height to complete the same by the end of 2031.

Those who fail to comply without any reasonable excuse for doing so could face unlimited fines or imprisonment. New legislation will also afford named bodies the necessary powers to remediate buildings with unsafe cladding if the landlord fails to do so.

Additional support has also been announced for leaseholders, including long-term support to help replace ‘Waking Watch’ measures and shield leaseholders from costly interim safety measures.



MAINTENANCE REQUIREMENTS UNDER THE FIRE SAFETY ORDER 2005

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 mandates regular maintenance of fire safety measures in non-domestic premises. This includes fire doors, escape routes, fire alarms, extinguishers, emergency lighting, automatic smoke vent systems, dry risers and other safety equipment. The Responsible Person, typically the building owner or Directors of right to manage companies, must ensure these are in good working order, fit for purpose with maintenance records in place. These records can be kept on site or centrally by the managing agent.

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE: New regulations introduce Residential PEEPs to support safer evacuation • Fire at mixed-use building – East Twickenham • How much asbestos is left in the UK? • 5 Top Tips • Company Director prosecuted for breaching fire safety regulations • How often should ladders be checked • Property company ordered to pay over £17,000 for fire safety breaches

NEW REGULATIONS INTRODUCE RESIDENTIAL PEEPS TO SUPPORT SAFER EVACUATION

From 6th April 2026, the Fire Safety (Residential Evacuation Plans) (England) Regulations 2025 will require 'Responsible Persons' (typically building owners or Directors) to identify residents who may need help evacuating in a fire and to take steps to support them. These residents, referred to as 'relevant residents', may have mobility, sensory or cognitive impairments..

The regulations introduce Residential Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (Residential PEEPs), which include identifying relevant residents, a person-centred fire risk assessment, an agreed emergency evacuation statement, optional consent-based sharing of information with the local Fire and Rescue Authority and the ongoing review of plans and evacuation procedures.

These duties are legally enforceable and apply to residential buildings over 18 metres (or seven storeys) or 11 metres and above with a simultaneous evacuation strategy.

The new rules follow recommendations from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry, which called for legally required evacuation planning for residents unable to self-evacuate. Government consultations found that workplace-style PEEPs were impractical in residential settings.

Participation in Residential PEEPs is voluntary and residents must give explicit consent for information sharing. Enforcement duties will be bestowed upon Fire and Rescue Authorities, although residents in higher-risk buildings can also raise complaints through the Building Safety Regulator.

The supporting factsheet produced by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government can be accessed at: [//www.gov.uk/government/publications/residential-peeps/residential-peeps-factsheet#overview](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/residential-peeps/residential-peeps-factsheet#overview)

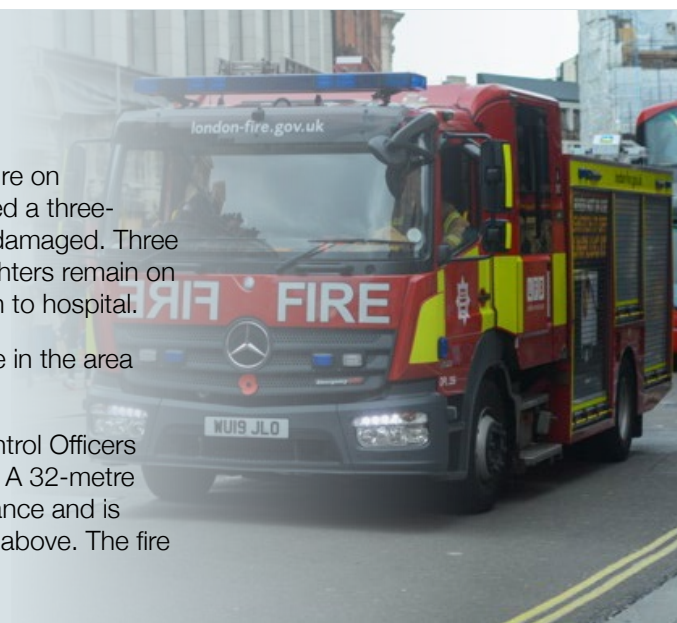
This story will develop in the coming months via our "News Update" communication tool to ensure you are kept informed of all changes.

FIRE AT MIXED-USE BUILDING – EAST TWICKENHAM

Ten fire engines and around 70 firefighters were called to a fire on Richmond Road in East Twickenham. The fire mostly involved a three-storey mixed-use building. The roof and second floor were damaged. Three neighbouring properties were also partially damaged. Firefighters remain on scene dampening down hotspots. One man has been taken to hospital.

The fire was producing a large amount of smoke and people in the area were advised to keep windows and doors closed.

The Brigade received the first of 34 calls at 4.38pm and Control Officers have mobilised crews from several surrounding fire stations. A 32-metre turntable ladder from Clapham Fire Station is also in attendance and is being used as a water tower to help extinguish the fire from above. The fire was brought under control by 6.20pm.



HOW MUCH ASBESTOS IS LEFT IN THE UK?

The Health & Safety Executive has said that between 210,000 and 400,000 buildings in the UK contain asbestos. Asbestos is, of course, the single greatest cause of work-related deaths in the UK.

Around 5,000 people die every year from asbestos-related diseases which typically take decades to develop and cannot be cured. Asbestos is a naturally occurring mineral, once prized for its heat and fire resistance, but now known to be a serious health hazard. It's been used in a wide variety of products, from building materials to everyday items, but is most dangerous when disturbed and inhaled as fibres.

COMPANY DIRECTOR PROSECUTED FOR BREACHING FIRE SAFETY REGULATIONS

Mr Anthony Coates, a company director from Walton-on-the-Naze in Essex, was prosecuted by West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service for significant breaches of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order (2005) at a sentencing in Lewes Crown Court.

The former office building was being converted into a seven-storey high-rise block of flats when Coates allowed the premises to be occupied before the escape routes (the corridor and stairs) were signed off as fire safety compliant. At a hearing, Coates pleaded guilty to five charges under the Fire Safety Order.

The court heard that a Fire Safety Inspecting Officer who was working on the building regulation consultation for this premises noticed lots of vehicles in the residents' car park when passing by. Upon investigation it became apparent that residents had wrongly been allowed to move into the properties.

This negligence endangered approximately 30 residents, and the breaches undermined the building's fire safety strategy; if a fire were to occur, anyone living or visiting the flats was placed at an increased risk of potential death or serious injury.

The severity of the offences was acknowledged by the court when Coates was sentenced to six months imprisonment and suspended for 12 months, along with a requirement to undertake 150 hours of unpaid community work, and fined £1,000.



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TOP TIPS



1. Ensure the escape routes are clear of combustible and flammable materials. Photos always provided.
2. Ensure that only pictures along the escape routes are glass fronted units and safely secured to the wall. Reducing flame spread along the escape route is essential.
3. Ensure maintenance procedures are in place and, where appropriate, premises logbooks are completed.
4. Ensure your emergency procedures are clear and obvious. If there is a "stay put" policy, a copy should be given to each resident annually.
5. Ensure portable appliance testing is completed on all single-phase electrical equipment (three-pin plugs) with labelling clearly visible on each device.

HOW OFTEN SHOULD LADDERS BE CHECKED?

Responsible Persons need to make sure that any ladder or stepladder are both suitable for the task and in a safe condition before use. Only use ladders or stepladders that show no visible defects if stored in the common areas. Such ladders or stepladders should be secured in place to prevent unauthorised use and hence prevent an accident.

The ladders or stepladders used in the common areas should have a formal inspection every 3-6 months conducted by a competent person. Records should be kept.



**COMMON FIRE ISSUES WHEN
CONVERTING COMMERCIAL UNITS TO A BLOCK OF FLATS; FIRE
DOORS, COMPARTMENTATION AND SIGNAGE.**



PROPERTY COMPANY ORDERED TO PAY OVER £17,000 FOR FIRE SAFETY BREACHES

A property company has been ordered to pay over £17,800 after being found guilty of significantly breaching the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order (2005).

On Friday (2 May 2025) Exzact Properties Ltd was successfully prosecuted by West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service for charges brought to the courtroom under the Fire Safety Order.

Exzact Properties Limited are deemed jointly responsible for fire safety management at Arizona House, a purpose built four-storey block of flats in East Grinstead.

Crawley Magistrates' Court heard that Exzact Properties had failed to respond to the fire service's requests for information following an audit where fire safety issues had been identified. The issues included:

- ▶ inappropriate method of fire detection
- ▶ combustible materials blocking the fire escape routes (including e-scooters) as well as being stored in the electrical intake cupboard

- ▶ incorrect fire action notices in the communal area and no evidence of a fire risk assessment.

Interim Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Dave Bray, said: "Fire safety regulations are in place for a reason and businesses with legal responsibility for fire safety management must adhere to these laws.

"We are extremely pleased with the outcome of this case and believe it serves as a strong reminder to any responsible persons that they must carry out a suitable and sufficient risk assessment of the risks in their premises.

"The courts have agreed that we were prevented from ensuring the fire safety standards in this residential building are being managed effectively. We will not allow companies to attempt to hide from their duties when our Fire Safety Regulators identify that the Fire Safety Order is not being complied with."

OUR RISK ASSESSMENT PROCESS

We have a specific process to ensure our reports are of value to you:

1. Our starting point is to collect information about the management checks in place via our document checklist;
2. We aim to visit your property at the next available date and access as many areas as possible, including a sample number of flat entrance doors;
3. Our goal is to issue your reports within 3 working days; and
4. We include a block summary sheet with our reports. This quick reference sheet lists the required actions, report references and timescales.