

Fire Safety Arrangements for Contractors Working in Kensington and Chelsea Council Buildings

1.0 Introduction

This document describes the policy and procedures for **contractors working in Kensington and Chelsea Council Housing Management buildings.**

Our buildings either operate:

- local evacuation procedures (where residents in flats evacuate if a fire occurs in their flat but there is no common fire alarm system), or
- simultaneous evacuation procedures (where detectors and alarms are provided throughout the building, which sounds in case of fire indicating the need to evacuate).

The procedure adopted depends on whether there is compartmentation that will contain a fire to the area that it starts, or whether a fire could breach the area in which it starts. Fire action notices in the building tell people what the procedure is for the specific building.

It is critical that contractors working in our buildings understand what to do in a fire in any Kensington and Chelsea Council building in which they work and this is fundamentally the responsibility of the contractor organization.

All contractors working in Kensington and Chelsea Council buildings, including contract managers and contractor staff, as well as third parties such as mobile phone infrastructure companies and staff, should be familiar with our buildings and their associated procedures.

Managers should ensure that all of their staff fully understand the Council's requirements and ensure that they take measures to overcome language barriers, where these exist.

If you take some time now to read and understand this document, it will help you know what to do, both day-to-day and in an emergency.

What this guide will tell you about

2.0 Fire safety management requirements for contractors

All third-party companies and staff have obligations to manage fire safety to the extent that they have any control. This means that any task or visit must be carried out safely.

3.0 Fire prevention

Fundamentally fire prevention is a key part of keeping our council homes safe. There are simple steps that you can take to keep our blocks safe.

4.0 Fire protection

If a fire does occur, there are measures in place in all our buildings to protect people, and we check these frequently to ensure that they are effective and will offer the protection needed. We give you some information on these measures in this plan document and what you need to do to ensure you do not compromise these measures.

5.0 Fire procedures

In the unlikely event of a fire it is important that everyone understands what to do, so we set out some instructions to help you know what to do.

6.0 What to do after a fire has occurred

It is important that you know what to do once a fire has occurred and been extinguished. The Council is committed to making sure that we deal with the consequences of any fire, so we give you information on what to do after a fire.

2.0 Fire Safety Management Requirements for Contractors

All contractor and third party companies are required to comply with all relevant legislation, including but not limited to the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015, and any other relevant regulations and supporting guidance. Some key fire safety requirements that Kensington and Chelsea Council has for third parties visiting or working in our buildings include:

- Contractors must never block escape routes of fire-fighting access routes or equipment.
- Contractors must never wedge open fire doors or cover fire detectors, smoke vents, etc.
- Contractors must not use, bring to site or store dangerous or flammable materials in Council buildings without express permission in writing from the Council.
- Contractors must not carry out hot works without express permission in writing from the Council and a hot works permit in place.
- All contractors must have documented suitable and sufficient risk assessments for all tasks that they may undertake, prior to undertaking any tasks, as well as all other relevant measures to satisfy CDM.
- All contractors must ensure that their risk assessments cover all areas for which they have any responsibility, including but not limited to stores, welfare areas and work areas.
- Contractors must share copies of their suitable and sufficient fire risk assessments with the RBKC fire safety team (firesafety@rbkc.gov.uk).
- All contractor staff must have received suitable fire safety training that includes fire evacuation training and, where necessary, use of fire extinguishers.
- All contractors must ensure that areas in which they work are clean and tidy, and that no rubbish or storage is left on site overnight.
- All contractors must report any housekeeping issues or other hazards to us immediately, by contacting the project manager and/or firesafety@rbkc.gov.uk.
- All contractor equipment must be subject to suitable maintenance and be in good, working conditions, with staff nominated to use any equipment suitably trained in its use.
- All contractors must be familiar with the emergency arrangements for the site they are working at.

3.0 Fire Prevention

The key to avoiding an emergency situation is to ensure that fire prevention measures are effective while you are present on site, within the areas in which you are working.

We are here to help with that and if you have any concerns at any point you can contact our fire safety team by emailing firesafety@rbkc.gov.uk, or calling our service centre on **0800 137 1111**, or reporting any concerns to your contract / project manager.

Below are some simple steps that we expect you to follow whilst working in our buildings.

Hot works

- You must not undertake hot works unless suitable risk assessments and method statements have been completed and you have specific written permission in the form of a hot works permit, issued by your employer and approved by the Council.
- As part of any permitted hot works, you must carry out a fire watch in accordance with the risk assessment and method statement.
- You must ensure that you take precautions to ensure areas in which you are cutting or carrying out hot works are clear of all other materials.
- You must ensure that you have adequately trained staff on hand with suitable extinguishing appliances for the duration of the works and the subsequent fire watch.

Flammable and hazardous materials

- Use of acetylene at RBKC is prohibited and you must not bring acetylene to site
- Use of alternative flammable gases can be used subject to suitable and sufficient risk assessment
- Your attention is drawn to the requirements of the Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations 2002 which must be adhered to in all relevant cases.
- The above regulations cover materials such as petrol and diesel, which must not be used or stored in RBKC Housing Management buildings without express agreement from the RBKC fire safety team (firesafety@rbkc.gov.uk), which will require you to carry out and share your suitable risk assessment.

Cooking

- You should never cook in Council buildings unless there is a designated kitchen welfare area and you have specific written permission from both your employer and the Council to do so, confirming that suitable and sufficient risk assessments are in place for this.

Electrical equipment

- All contractor equipment used in Council buildings must be subject to suitable control measures under contractor's suitable and sufficient risk assessment.

- You must not use any equipment which has not been subject to risk assessed portable appliance testing.
- Do not overload extension leads.
- Make sure that plugs are plugged in firmly.
- If any equipment or cables are damaged, do not use them. Get them repaired by a professional.
- Keep combustible materials away from socket points and cables.

Heaters

- Contractors must never use portable heaters without express permission in writing from the Council.
- If permission is granted to use a heater:
 - Make sure it is never located near to furniture, clothing or other combustible materials.
 - Choose a portable heater that is safe – **do not use radiant bar heaters** – oil-filled radiator heaters are a safer option.

Candles

- You must never use any candles in Council buildings.

Smoking

- Smoking is prohibited in all Council buildings and you must never smoke in any area of our buildings.
- If you choose to smoke, you must do so outside and away from the building (minimum distance of six metres).
- You must not smoke near residents' windows.
- Make sure that you fully extinguish your cigarette in a suitable ashtray.

Housekeeping

- Common areas must always be kept clear.
- You must never store materials or waste in areas used by residents.
- You must remove all materials from site when finished.
- If you find waste or storage in your work area when you arrive, you must take a picture of these immediately and report it to your site / project or contract manager and the appropriate staff within the Council.
- Keep escape routes from the area that you are working clear in case you need to escape in an emergency.
- Do not dump or store items next to the building in external areas.

Arson

- Be vigilant to antisocial behaviour and report this to the Council.
- Behaviours such as graffiti, deliberate damage and setting of small fires can escalate into more serious issues.
- Be aware of tailgaters – never let any unauthorised persons into our buildings.

4.0 Fire Protection

Compartmentation and fire resisting construction

- Our buildings are built using fire resisting walls and floors around flats, storerooms, plant rooms, staircases, etc.
- You must never drill or cut through any wall or floor without express permission in writing from the Council. Doing so is likely to constitute a criminal offence for which you can be personally prosecuted.
- If you have been permission to drill or cut construction within one of our blocks, you must ensure that there are arrangements in place to carry out proper fire-stopping as soon as your works are complete. You should not start work until you have confirmed this.

Means of escape

- All Council buildings contain escape routes which must be kept clear at all times.
- Before starting work, you should make sure that you are familiar with the escape routes, their locations and where they lead to.
- If you are working in an inner room (i.e. you access the room in which you are working via another room), you should either keep the door between the rooms open while you work or ensure that there is a smoke detector and alarm in the access room. This will ensure that you are aware of a fire that starts in the access room.
- If you are working on a roof, you need to familiarize yourself with escape routes, including any alternative escape routes, before you start work.

Fire detection and alarm systems

- Council buildings that have 'simultaneous evacuation' procedures are provided with detectors, sounders, call points and panels.
- You must never cover smoke detectors or interfere with fire alarm equipment in any other way without express permission in writing from the RBKC fire safety team (firesafety@rbkc.gov.uk).
- Report any problems with fire alarms to the Council.

Fire doors

- Fire doors to plant room, storerooms, flats and areas in the common parts protect escape routes from fire and smoke.
- Do not wedge these doors open.
- If the door becomes faulty, report it to the Council so that we can repair it.

Smoke ventilation

- In many Council buildings, there are windows or openings that are designed to keep escape routes clear of smoke.
- These can be used by fire-fighters during a fire to keep escape routes clear.
- Do not interfere with or cover vents at any time.

- Report any issues with smoke vents to firesafety@rbkc.gov.uk.

Access and facilities for London Fire Brigade

- It is vital that London Fire Brigade can quickly get to any fire in or around our blocks.
- Do not block hydrants (which will be coloured yellow).
- Do not block dry riser outlets or inlets.
- Do not block vehicle access routes.

Information on extinguishers

- The Council provide extinguishers in some plant rooms to use if a fire occurs.
- You must ensure that your employer has provided you with suitable training in the use of extinguishers and that you are confident in using an extinguisher before attempting to do so.
- If there is a serious fire that you cannot extinguish, close the door, alert anyone in the area, evacuate and call the fire and rescue service immediately.

Planning for emergencies

- You should always have with you a mobile phone when working on a Council site.
- If a fire occurs, you should evacuate and immediately call '999' and ask for London Fire Brigade, giving the full site address.
- The best way to prepare yourself for a fire is to have a clear plan in your mind of what you will do if a fire does occur.
- Planning for your evacuation can make the process much quicker and safer should a fire occur.

5.0 Fire Procedures


The fire procedures for our blocks are either based on local evacuation or simultaneous evacuation.

Local evacuation

People need only evacuate areas in the locale of any fire and smoke.

In case of fire in the building:

Leave immediately and phone London Fire Brigade by dialling 999 from a phone when outside the building. Give the address of the building and wait at a safe distance for London Fire Brigade to arrive.

	If you discover fire in plant rooms, store areas or other communal areas, alert any persons in the communal areas to ensure that everyone is aware.
	Close all doors within the communal areas if it is safe to do so.
	Evacuate the block.
	When outside the building, dial '999' on a phone and ask for London Fire Brigade, giving the building address.
	When London Fire Brigade arrive, meet them and tell them where the fire is. Do not re-enter the building until they have extinguished the fire and let you know that it is safe.





Simultaneous evacuation

In case of fire in the building:

Leave immediately and phone London Fire Brigade by dialling 999 from a phone when outside the building. Give the address of the building and wait at a safe distance for London Fire Brigade to arrive.

	If you discover fire, alert any persons in the vicinity to ensure that everyone is aware.
	Close all doors within your work area and the communal areas if it is safe to do so.
	Evacuate the block.
	Raise the alarm by breaking a red 'break-glass' call point on your escape route.
	When outside the building, dial '999' on a phone and ask for London Fire Brigade, giving the building address.
	When London Fire Brigade arrive, meet them and tell them where the fire is. Do not re-enter the building until they have extinguished the fire and let you know that it is safe.

In case of the fire alarm sounding in the building:

	If you hear the fire alarm sounding, start evacuating.
	Close all doors on your escape route if it is safe to do so.
	Evacuate your work area.
	Do not re-enter the building until London Fire Brigade or the Council let you know that it is safe to do so.

In case of a false alarm:

In the event that a fire alarm activation is false, please call the Council immediately on:

0800 137 111

So that we can attend to silence and reset the system

Please do not re-enter the building until the alarm has been resolved and either London Fire Brigade or a representative from the Council give the all clear.

6.0 What to do following a fire

After the fire is extinguished by London Fire Brigade, the Council's first role is to make sure that the building is safe to re-occupy.

Call our customer service centre on:

0800 137 111

For assistance.