



## Fire safety in flats, apartments and communal areas

South Liverpool Homes (SLH) takes the safety of customers living in our flats and apartments very seriously. We have a legal responsibility to make you aware of fire safety and to let you know about the procedures we have in place to keep you safe.

This information lets you know what to do if a fire breaks out, what our responsibilities are and what you can do to minimise the risk of fire in your home to protect you, your family and your neighbours. Please read it carefully and keep it in a safe place for future reference.

## Working together to keep your home fire safe

### Your responsibilities

What are my obligations to ensure myself, my family and my neighbours are safe?

- If you're a tenant, let us in to carry out annual gas safety checks and electrical tests in your home. This is a crucial part in helping us keep you safe in your home and it is an obligation of your tenancy agreement.
- Keep landings, staircases and entrance halls in your building clear of any obstacles such as plants, bikes or pushchairs. SLH staff carry out periodic checks but if you have any concerns please contact us on 0330 303 3000.
- Wheelie bins must be kept outside at all times and all rubbish must be placed in them and not left in communal areas. Bags of rubbish left around are a key target for arsonists.
- If you're a tenant, a smoke alarm has been provided in the entrance hall of your home, which is maintained annually by SLH. The easiest and most effective way of protecting your home is making sure it works. Keep the smoke alarm free from dust and test it once a week. If you do not have a smoke alarm in your apartment, please contact us on 0330 303 3000 and we will arrange to have one fitted.
- Ensure no flammable materials, liquids or gas containers are stored inside your communal storage cupboard. The cupboard must be kept locked at all times when not requiring immediate access and the lock used must be the one provided by SLH. Under no circumstances must any additional locks be fitted.
- All the entrances to our flats and apartments have been fitted with fire doors which have self-closing devices to ensure your safety in the unlikely event a fire. These self-closing devices must not be tampered with. Any damage to glass, letterboxes, eye viewers or the door and frame must be reported to SLH immediately. Read more about fire doors later in this leaflet.
- If you have a balcony, you must keep it free from clutter and combustible items. This is for your safety to ensure access is available to the emergency services if you ever had to be evacuated from the balcony in case of an emergency.
- Ensure you have read the Fire Action Notice displayed within the communal area of your building, you are familiar with the fire safety evacuation route and know where your fire assembly point is in case of emergency.
- Be aware of the emergency lighting installed and report any damage immediately to SLH. Observe the fire exit signs and fire door storage areas and report any instances of misuse.

### What other precautions can I take to reduce the risk of fire?

- Make your own fire action plan so that everyone in your home knows how to escape if there is a fire. Refer to the Fire Action Notices in the building for advice. We will post these notices out to you annually too.
- Keep the exits from your home clear so that people can escape if there is a fire.
- Make sure that everyone in your home can easily find the keys for doors and windows.
- Take extra care in the kitchen – accidents while cooking account for over half of fires in homes. Never leave young children alone in the kitchen. Take extra care when cooking with hot oil. Consider buying a deep-fat fryer which is controlled by thermostat (if you don't already have one).
- Never leave lit candles in rooms that nobody is in or in rooms where children are on their own. Make sure candles are in secure holders on a surface that doesn't burn and are away from any materials that could burn.
- If anyone smokes, make sure cigarettes are stubbed out properly and are disposed of carefully, never smoke in bed.
- Get into the habit of closing doors at night. If you want to keep a child's bedroom door open, close the doors to the lounge and kitchen; it may well help save their life if there is a fire.
- Don't overload electrical sockets. Remember, one plug for one socket. Don't leave the TV or other electrical appliances on standby as this could cause a fire. Switch them off at the plug when not in use.

## Our responsibilities

- We will carry out annual fire risk assessments in our blocks of flats and independent living schemes.
- We will implement necessary controls such as fire alarm systems, evacuation procedures and emergency lighting to ensure your safety. These are all checked on a regular basis.
- We will carry out monthly checks of the communal areas to identify if there are any breaches to fire safety.
- We will display an evacuation plan and fire action notice in all communal blocks. They are displayed on the ground floor near the main entrance/exit to the building. The fire action notice gives you clear information about what you should do in the event of a fire. It lets you know what to do whether the fire breaks out in your flat, a neighbouring flat or in the communal area.
- We will carry out annual gas safety checks and electrical inspections in all our tenanted homes, to ensure all gas and electrical equipment fitted by SLH is safe. This includes checking your smoke alarms are working properly.
- We will provide relevant fire safety instructions, which will include instructions on how to report a fire and any other instruction which sets out what you must do once a fire has occurred, based on the evacuation strategy for the building.
- We will provide residents with information relating to the importance of fire doors in fire safety.
- We will publish fire risk assessment reports on the South Liverpool Homes website, so you are aware of any risks identified.

## Advice for people with additional needs

If you or a member of your household have any difficulty seeing, hearing or moving about the home, you will need to take extra care to deal with the risk of a fire. SLH and Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service will be able to assess how safe your home is and help fit additional fire safety equipment if it is required.

Please inform SLH if you or a member of your household is unable to use the stairs unaided in the event of an emergency evacuation.

## In the event of a fire in your building

Follow the guidance set out in the Fire Action Notice displayed within the communal area of your building. We will supply you with a copy of this notice on an annual basis.

### Calling the fire service

You should always call the fire service immediately in the event of a fire, however small.

1. Call 999 or 112.
2. When the operator answers, give the telephone number you are ringing from and ask for FIRE.
3. When the fire service replies, tell them clearly the address where the fire is.
4. Do not end the call until the fire service has repeated the address back to you and you are sure they have got it right. The fire service cannot help if they do not have the full address.

## Fire Doors

Buildings are broken up into small areas called 'compartments', to delay the spread of fire from one area to another. These compartments are usually linked by fire doors.

All the entrances to our flats and apartments have been fitted with fire doors which have self-closing devices to ensure your safety in the unlikely event a fire. Fire doors have two important functions in a fire:

1. When closed, they form a barrier to stop the spread of fire, helping to protect a building's escape routes.
2. When opened they provide a means of escape.

Please ensure these doors are not deliberately wedged open and that doors and self-closing devices are not tampered with, as it may prevent them working properly in the event of a fire. If any damage occurs to the doors, such as damage to closers, draught strips, glass, letterboxes, eye viewers or the door and frame, it must be reported to SLH immediately.

### Why are self-closing devices important?

When an emergency alarm is sounded or a fire is discovered, the evacuating occupants may not necessarily fully close the doors behind them as they leave. A closed fire door will help prevent the spread of smoke and fire onto or through escape routes. Working and well-maintained self-closing devices will help avoid this situation.

### How do fire door seals work?

Special 'intumescent' seals, which expand when exposed to heat, are fitted to the sides and tops of fire doors in our homes. As soon as the temperature in the vicinity of the seals exceeds 200°C, usually about 10-15 minutes after the start of a fire, the seals swell and close the gaps between the door and frame. Smoke is an even greater threat to life and property than flames, particularly in the early stages of a fire, so fire doors might also be fitted with a 'cold smoke' seal to prevent smoke passing around the door edges.

We inspect the condition of these seals annually as part of our overall fire risk assessments, and our staff and contractors also check the condition of fire doors when carrying out regular cleaning and maintenance. However if you notice any damage to your own front door or any of the fire doors in communal areas, please report this to SLH straight away. For these seals to work effectively, the gaps around the top and sides of the door should be no more than 4mm, with the gap underneath the door between 3mm and 8mm depending upon the type of seal fitted.

If you have any concerns about the fire doors in your building please call us on 0330 303 3000.

## Check your flat entrance door - it's as easy as 1-2-3



1 Check that the self-closing device on your flat entrance door is present, intact, and working properly. Don't wedge your door open or tamper with your self-closing mechanism in any way.



2 Check that the fire and smoke seals on the sides and top of your door are present, intact and not damaged in any way. In the event of a fire they swell up and seal the door from smoke and flames.



3 Finally, make sure that your door and frame are not damaged in any way. Open your door about 15-20cm and ensure that it closes completely by itself and does not stick on the floor or hit the frame.

## Key SLH fire safety contacts

**Address:**

South Liverpool Homes, Parklands, Conleach Rd, Speke, Liverpool L24 0TY

**The Chief Executive of SLH (Responsible Person and Duty Holder): Anna Bishop**

The Chief Executive has overall management responsibilities for South Liverpool Homes and is the Duty Holder responsible for the procedures and working practices and the strategic management of the compliance policy.

**Building Safety Lead: Eddie McDermott**

The Building Safety Lead is the Competent Person responsible for all aspects of building safety at SLH.

**Consultants and contractors**

Available on your fire risk assessment report published at [www.southliverpoolhomes.co.uk/firesafety](http://www.southliverpoolhomes.co.uk/firesafety)

## Declaration

We hope this document is straightforward and gives you a complete understanding of your legal responsibilities as a customer in our flats or apartments. If you need clarification, please speak to us before signing below.

Failure to comply with any of the above will put adjoining residents at risk and, in the event of a serious incident, may result in legal proceedings against the offending occupier.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Your signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



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