

Fire Safety Policy

Prepared October 2020

To be reviewed annually – Next update due October 2021

Halfacres
Sheltered Housing Scheme
Woolborough Road
Northgate
Crawley
West Sussex
RH10 8AZ



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1 General Statement of Policy

Crawley Borough Council are committed to ensuring the health and safety of everyone who works for us and also everyone who may be affected by the Councils activities, including residents, visitors, contractors and the general public. The Council aims to provide the optimum approach giving equal regard to the environment, health and safety, services, quality and cost.

This policy sets out the arrangements that are necessary to achieve the above while complying with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and all other applicable legislation.

At Halfacres we take the safety of our residents and staff very seriously and in doing so have ensured that the premises meet the latest regulations which are essential for the safety of all concerned.

This policy can only be successful with the active co-operation of all residents & employees who have responsibility for taking care of themselves and others.

This policy will be reviewed annually and revised as necessary in response to changes in legislation or methods of working.

Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karen Dodds', is written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and cursive.

Karen Dodds, Head of Crawley Homes

Date 14 October 2020

2 Action to be taken by a person discovering a fire

If a fire is discovered the alarm will be raised by breaking the nearest break glass call point and the alarm will sound throughout the entire building. When the Duty Officer is off site the alarm will also automatically alert Mole Valley Life Care Centre who will on all occasions call the Fire Service and ask them to attend.

Furthermore, there is automatic detection in all risk areas, including individual flats which will allow for a fire to be detected when an area is unoccupied hence giving an early warning. When the Duty Officer is off site this automatic detection will again alert Mole Valley Life Care Centre.

3 How will the fire service be called on the alarm being activated

The Fire Service will always be called when the alarm sounds, by using the recognised 999 system.

The Duty Officer on site will always be responsible for calling the Emergency Service when on site. They will state the full postal address and incident details i.e. location within scheme, and persons who are trapped if known. They will not hang up until told to do so by the operator. The full postal address of the building is: Halfacres, Woolborough Road, Northgate, Crawley, West Sussex, RH10 8AZ



If the Duty Officer is off site, the hard wired fire system will automatically alert Mole Valley Life Care Centre who will call the Fire Service stating the full postal address and any useful information about the fire.

4 The fire warning system

The fire warning system is fully compliant with the Category L2 system of BS 5839: Part 1 (protection of all escape stairways, all corridors, any other areas that form part of the common escape routes, all flats).

A bell/siren sounds to indicate the activation of the fire warning system. It can be clearly heard throughout the building. There are additional warnings in place for those who have hearing issues such as flashing beacons in their property and vibrating pillows.

The regular testing of equipment will be carried out by a reputable company for the six monthly and annual inspection tests, in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

5 The Fire Evacuation Procedure

The designated assembly point is next to the fenced wooden recycling area in the Car park of Halfacres.

Stage 1

In the event of the fire alarm sounding all residents have been told to stay in their flats, close windows and doors and prepare themselves in case of an evacuation. This information is on the inside of each of resident's front doors.

On calling the Fire Service the Duty Officer, if on site, will check the location of the fire from the fire panel. Then, without putting themselves at risk, will assess the seriousness of the situation.

If it is safe to do so staff will help evacuate residents who are at risk because they are located close to the source of the fire and also consider the evacuation of adjoining flats in the compartment. This evacuation will be at least to beyond the first set of safety doors in the corridor.

All other tenants will stay put (delayed response) unless West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service instruct tenants otherwise.

Stage 2

If there is an increased risk to adjoining flats due to fire/smoke growth, adjacent flats within the compartment zone are to be evacuated to a safe area. Following instruction from Fire Brigade this area could be inside the building (communal lounge with the exit to the outside) or evacuation to the designated assembly point which is next to the fenced wooden recycling area in the Car park of Halfacres.

However, if at any time the means of escape for these residents is threatened they should be evacuated to a safe area for example to neighbour's flats away from the fire.

If the Duty Officer is not on site, Mole Valley Life Care Centre will call the Fire Service. Additionally they will call the Duty Officer who will attend as soon as possible.

LIFTS MUST NOT USED WHEN THE FIRE ALARM IS SOUNDING.

No person will re-enter without the permission of the Senior Fire Officer present.

6 The assembly point

The designated assembly point is next to the fenced wooden recycling area in the Car park of Halfacres.

7 Duties and responsibilities of specific personnel

The Duty Officer, when on site, will be responsible for ensuring a detailed list of all residents, outside contractors and visitors within Halfacres.

When the Duty Officer is not on site and the Fire alarm has been raised. Mole Valley Life Care Centre will call the Duty Officer in addition to the Fire Service who will attend any emergency.

All other staff will upon hearing the alarm ensure as far as reasonably possible without endangering their safety that all communal gas and electrical appliances are turned off and then usher and assist all residents and visitors to the designated assembly point.

Security must be considered at all times by key personnel during the evacuation process.

In the event of a major incident and a full evacuation of the building, the Crawley Borough Council Emergency Plan will be invoked. To invoke this out of hours, call 01293 438000 and the relevant personnel will be informed.

8 Fire fighting equipment

Fire fighting equipment is supplied to the relevant British Standard (BS 5306-3:2003) which provides information for the installation and maintenance of portable fire extinguishers.

All portable fire fighting equipment will be unobstructed, ready for immediate use and will be securely mounted on wall brackets with the carrying handle a maximum of 1.1m above the floor.

The annual testing of equipment will be carried out by a reputable company, in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

Extinguishers are located at various locations throughout the site.

9 Disabled Persons

Due to the design of the building, disabled access is available.

A list of all residents, including those with disabilities, is available next to at the fire panel in a locked box. Tenants who need assistance to evacuate the building are highlighted in red. This list is also sent through to West Sussex Fire Brigade when it is updated.

Crawley Borough Council is fully aware of the legal requirements under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA). We ensure that the fire warning system takes into account the needs of the individual residents.

The instruction to return to the building will be given by the Senior Fire Officer present.

10 Staff Training

To be effective, any evacuation plan depends on the ability of staff to respond efficiently. Staff will therefore require regular instruction including, appropriate and adequate training to fulfil their responsibilities.

This may include some or all of the following elements:

- Action on discovering the alarm
- Calling the emergency service
- Means of escape
- The assembly point
- Use of extinguishers
- Fire Drills
- Basic fire prevention

Crawley Borough Council will provide suitable and sufficient training on all of the above topics.

All staff upon starting with Crawley Borough Council will have a recognised induction which includes Health & Safety Policy and Fire Safety Policy including evacuation routes and the sound of the fire alarm system.

All staff will be periodically trained in basic Fire Safety, fire chemistry, how fire spreads and the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. Records of this training are kept in the Fire Log file on the premises.

11 Outside contractors and visitors

Outside contractors are required to sign in and out using the visitor book located at the main entrance to Halfacres.

In the event of a fire alarm sounding all outside contractors and visitors must make their way to the fire evacuation assembly point which is next to the fenced wooden recycling area in the car park of Halfacres.

Visitors who are staying in the guest rooms will have instructions on the inside of guest room front doors to evacuate the room and make their way to the evacuation assembly point in the car park as above.

12 General

All members of staff should be aware, at all times, of any potential fire hazards and if in doubt report them immediately to the Duty Officer. Furthermore a quarterly workplace inspection is carried out by the Duty Officer.

Combustible rubbish should be stored safely in appropriate containers away from emergency exits and removed daily.

The only pyrotechnics allowed on site will be with the prior permission of the Duty Officer. The organisers will only use professional, accredited suppliers and supply all required documentation in line with the Explosive Act 2002.

The final decision rests with Duty Officer as to whether, even at the last minute, these go ahead.

Naked flames should only be used with great caution in tenant's flats and Crawley Borough Council do not encourage this practice. They should be extinguished with care and disposed of in an appropriate manner (not thrown into waste bins containing combustible materials). There will be no naked flames in communal areas.

All hirers and users of the communal areas will be informed that any electrical equipment they bring into the building must be PAT tested and fit for purpose.

13 Test procedures and frequencies

Fire Extinguishers (for further information see B.S.5306 : Part 3)

A monthly visual inspection by the Duty Officer, to ensure that all extinguishers are in their proper position and have not been discharged or lost pressure or suffered obvious damage, will be carried out and recorded.

Annual inspection – this will be carried out by a competent person in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

At further intervals this competent person will test discharge the extinguisher in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

Fire Alarm (for further information see B.S.5839 : Part 1)

Daily inspect the panel for normal operation of the system.

Weekly test by the Duty Officer and operate a call point, using a different call point and zone in a strict rotation every week. A visual inspection of all batteries and connections, including electrolyte levels also carried out.

Quarterly inspection tests carried out by a competent person in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions.

Fire Detectors (for further information see B.S.5839 : Part 1)

Regular visual inspection should be carried out of detectors for damage, heavy dirt loads, paint or any other condition that could interfere with its operation.

Annual test by doing 25% of tests on a quarterly rotation basis should be carried out by a competent person in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions.

Automatic Door Releases connected to the Fire Alarm system

Weekly at the same time as the Fire Alarm test ensuring release and closure fully on to the door rebates.

Emergency Lighting (for further information see B.S.5266 : Part 1)

Regularly inspect the system for cleanliness together with the battery bank and generators in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

Daily Visually check that all maintained lamp are operating and that all system healthy indicators on Central Power Supply Systems (sometimes called Central Battery Systems) are illuminated. Check that any recorded system fault is given urgent attention and record all corrective actions in the logbook provided.

Monthly Check all luminaires and other emergency lighting equipment are in a good condition, all lamps and light controllers are clean, undamaged and not blackened. Briefly test all emergency lighting equipment by simulating a failure of the normal lighting supply. The test should not exceed a quarter of the equipment rated duration. Check that all equipment functions correctly. Check that, upon restoring the mains supply, all supply healthy indicators are again illuminated.

Six Monthly Carry out the inspection and testing as described in the monthly test schedule, but conduct a test of the equipment for one third of its rated duration.

Annually A full system test should be conducted by a competent service engineer including a full rated duration test of the system. Compliance of the installation and system with the requirements of BS 5266 should be considered and documented.

Fire Drills

At six monthly intervals a fire drill should be carried out to simulate a fire situation e.g. an escape route obstructed. No prior notice should be given to tenants apart from any necessary health & safety advice, and then the fire alarm operated with the Fire Service being pre-warned of the test situation.

At all times the tests **MUST** be recorded in the Fire Log Book on the premises.