



Fire Safety Management of Communal Areas in blocks of flats

Guidance Note For Tenants

1. Caerphilly County Borough Council (CCBC) takes its responsibility with regard to fire safety for residents very seriously. CCBC minimises the risk of fire as much as possible by conducting Fire Risk Assessments and this includes all communal areas being sterile areas free from any objects or combustible materials. This will include rubbish, furniture, wheelie bins, carpets, curtains and any other items on landings or shared stairs which could obstruct the exit route, or promote fire spread within common escape routes but not inside each resident's flat. These risk assessments identify key actions to reduce risk to residents in each individual block, however in relation to the communal areas – halls, stairs, stairwells and landings, and these guidance notes aim to minimise the risk of fire.
2. In striking the balance between fire safety and personalisation of communal areas, CCBC has sought the advice of the Fire Officer. The result is a common sense approach, which we hope resident's feel is fair.
 - 2.1 Doormats will be acceptable so long as they are:
 - Specifically intended to be a door mat,
 - With a non-slip backing material,
 - In good condition and free from curling edges,
 - Placed directly in front of the resident's door,
 - Not oversized (max width of door x 18in),
 - Not located at the top of stairs, (tripping hazard)
 - Rugs, runners, carpet off cuts and carpet tiles will **NOT** be acceptable.
 - 2.2 Resident's furniture will **NOT** be acceptable under any circumstances, including chairs, tables, cupboards, and screens.
 - 2.3 Plants, pots, plastic flowers, containers, shelving racks or other storage containers, resident's footwear will **NOT** be permitted.
 - 2.4 Pictures and other wall ornaments will **NOT** be allowed.

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- 2.5 Net Curtains and other window shades, blinds or curtains will **NOT** be acceptable in communal areas.
- 2.6 Mobility Scooters - If you wish to use or store a mobility scooter you will need to contact your local Housing Office for appropriate consent and advice. Contact details for the Housing Offices are listed at the end of this advice leaflet. Consent will not be unreasonably withheld but would have to be in compliance with Health & Safety and other Policies or Procedures covering the communal area.
- 2.7 Charging of mobility scooters, batteries or other electrical equipment in common areas will **NOT** be allowed.
- 2.8 Bicycles, prams, pushchairs, wheelchairs and similar items will **NOT** be permitted to be stored or located within the internal communal parts of the scheme.
- 2.9 Recycling receptacles and rubbish bins are **NOT** permitted to be stored or located within the internal communal parts of the scheme.
- 2.10 No items are to be stored in any communal cupboard area or under stairs area.
- 2.11 Any other object or item that obstructs or creates trip hazards in any walkway, stair or corridor is **NOT** acceptable.
- 2.12 Any other object or item that presents a significant fire hazard or additional fire loading is **NOT** acceptable.
3. Where items have been identified which cause a hazard to people using or living within the block then CCBC will take action to remove these items. The Council's tenancy agreement puts responsibility onto tenants:

"To keep the common part of flats in a clean and tidy condition and free from obstruction"

- 3.1 Tenants therefore have a responsibility to keep their areas clear. Any inspections, for whatever reason, which reveal the guidance has been contravened, must result in the appropriate enforcement action being taken.

Whilst notice can be served under the terms of the tenancy agreement, this may not always be appropriate. If a tenant has failed to remove items as requested, we may choose to arrange removal and recharge the tenant.

- 3.2 During a Fire Risk Assessment, any items found in the communal areas will be reported and catalogued. It will be the responsibility of the

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Area or Neighbourhood Housing Office to take appropriate action to remove the risk.

4. Any tenant who uses Medical Oxygen cylinders in their home must ensure this is reported to their Housing Office. As with other services, for example, gas and electricity, precautions have to be taken. There are a number of hazards associated with oxygen and due caution should be given to these during use and storage:
 - Make sure your oxygen equipment is stored safely out of direct sunlight, well ventilated, always dry and away from heat sources.
 - Don't use oxygen near naked flames, including gas and electric cookers – 3 metres is a safe distance.
 - Never smoke or used electrical equipment, such as hairdryers, whilst using oxygen.
5. Tenants are also reminded that if a bulky items collection is arranged they must ensure the items are placed out for collection by 6am on the morning of the advised collection date and not before. The items must be kept dry and should be placed safely outside only on the day of collection to avoid any tripping hazards, blocked entrances and any risks to others where there are steps.
- 6.0 If there is any uncertainty regarding the above information, please contact your local housing office for further advice or guidance.

Housing Office Contact Details:

Upper Rhymney Valley Area Housing Office,
Gilfach House,
William Street,
Gilfach,
Bargoed, CF81 8ND
Tel: 01443 873535
Urvaho@caerphilly.gov.uk

Eastern Valleys Area Housing Office,
Pontllanfraith House,
Pontllanfraith,
Blackwood, NP12 2YW
Tel: (01495) 235229
eastvalleyaho@caerphilly.gov.uk

Lansbury Park Neighbourhood Housing Office,
45 Atlee Court,
Lansbury Park,
Caerphilly, CF83 1QU
Tel: (029) 2086 0917
Lansburyparknho@caerphilly.gov.uk

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Grays Gardens,
Graig-y-Rhacca,
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