

1. What is London Fire Brigade's policy in the event of a fire? Do we stay put in our flats or do we try to escape?

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 is the legislation enforced by the London Fire Brigade. This legislation applies to all workplaces and the common parts of blocks of flats. IE: Staircases, corridors etc. The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 requires a fire risk assessment to be carried out by the "Responsible Person". In the case of Croydon Council properties this responsibility will fall on the Council. Any fire strategy, ie: stay put or simultaneous evacuation will need to be addressed in this assessment. The assessment should be based on the level of passive protection IE: walls, ceilings, floors and doors as well as other factors. A stay put strategy relies on this passive protection. Therefore please see the following guidance which is based on suitable compartmentation having been established in a block.

Escaping a fire in your flat

Our guidance is to stay put unless your flat is being affected by fire or smoke. This is based on the fire protection provided in the building and the walls and doors of each flat. This has been the case for many decades and – although fires in flats happen every day – they rarely spread beyond the flat on fire. However, some smoke may enter corridors when the residents leave the flat on fire, or firefighters enter the flat to extinguish the fire. When you stay put, you reduce the risk of entering a smoky corridor unnecessarily and potentially being overcome by smoke. Staying put also means firefighters can tackle the fire safely and quickly without being delayed by many residents evacuating down the stairways.

Fire outside your flat but within your block or building?

Purpose-built maisonettes or blocks of flats are built to give you some protection from fire. This means that walls, floors and doors can hold back flames and smoke for 30 to 60 minutes. You are usually safer staying put and calling 999. Tell the fire brigade where you are and the best way to reach you.

Fire inside your flat?

If there's a fire inside your flat, your escape plan is relatively simple:

- Take the normal way out – though don't use the lift.
- Keep door keys where everyone you live with can find them easily.
- Don't waste time investigating what's happened or rescuing valuables – remember, get out, stay out.
- Move as quickly but as safely as you can as you exit the building.
- Close doors behind you to slow down the spread of fire and smoke.
- Call 999 as soon as you are safe to do so.

Fire or smoke inside your home but your escape route is not clear?

If you can't use your planned escape route safely, you may be safer to stay in your flat or maisonette until the fire brigade arrives.

- Find a safe room as far as possible within the flat from any fire or smoke (with a window if possible), close the door and use soft materials to block any gaps to stop the smoke.
- Go to a window, shout 'HELP, FIRE' and call 999.

- Be ready to describe where you are and the quickest way for firefighters to reach you.
- Try and stay on the line and act on the advice provided.

What about escape plans for vulnerable people?

- If you – or anyone you live with – might find it difficult to escape in an emergency, why not contact us and book a free fire safety visit for expert advice tailored to you.
- Our firefighters will visit you at home, help plan your escape route, and give advice about sprinkler systems and special fire detection options.

2. Are the Fire Brigade going to carry out a further safety review of ALL blocks as it was two years ago since I believe this was done?

LFB carry out periodic inspections on blocks of flats based on the level of risk (risk based). This will vary from block to block but will typically be between 18 month and 36 months dependant on the level of risk. Any inspection will be carried out by an inspecting officer, usually in the company of the Responsible person (Council Official) in the case of Croydon blocks. Any deficiencies will be brought to the attention of the Responsible person for required actions.

3. We have been told we cannot have front door mats and nothing should be in the corridors. Does the Fire Brigade think it is ok for Deliveroo to bring their bikes into the building? I told one of the bike riders that bikes should not be in the building and got told to F off.

Whilst it would be difficult to comment on this individual case without all the facts, please feel free to send your concerns to FSR-CroydonSuttonBromley@london-fire.gov.uk and we can arrange for some further investigation. With regards to the use of front door mats, this is to ensure that all common parts of a premises remain “sterile” to ensure that no ignition sources or combustible materials are present. This is to ensure that all means of escapes remain available for use if a fire breaks out and to ensure that a fire does not occur in the communal areas.

4. I am concerned about unkempt gardens where they have become so overgrown that if a fire were to start it could spread to any adjacent buildings or blocks of flats and put residents lives at risk. What can the council do to persuade tenants and leaseholders to keep gardens in order?

Dependant on the specific situation this is unlikely to be dealt with under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. However, if you would like to let us know about the specific situation via the email link below, I will arrange for liaison with the local authority to establish who the lead authority would be regarding enforcement.

FSR-CroydonSuttonBromley@london-fire.gov.uk