



Cheshire
Fire & Rescue Service

FIRE SAFETY

House in Multiple Occupation (HMO)

Do you live in or own a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO)?

If so, you should be aware of your responsibilities in relation to fire safety.

What is a HMO?

A HMO is a house or flat, which is occupied by three or more unrelated persons, forming more than one household, and who share facilities such as a kitchen, bathroom or toilet.

For further information visit:

www.cheshirefire.gov.uk/business-safety



Working in partnership with:



Responsibilities of the Owner/Manager

The risk of fire breaking out in a House in Multiple Occupation is greater than in a single family home.

LACORS Housing Fire Safety Guide

This guide is intended for buildings which have been constructed or adapted for use as a domestic property and covers a range of residential premises including HMOs. However, it doesn't apply to properties constructed or converted to a standard in compliance with the Building Regulations 1991 or later, provided they still meet those standards.

Buildings which were originally compliant with these regulations typically do not require additional fire safety measures unless:

- the building use has changed
- risks have been added or
- the state of the building has deteriorated due to poor maintenance, damage or alterations

in which case this guidance should be applied. Properties built or converted since 1991 should continue to be maintained to the standards set out in regulations at the time of construction or conversion.

A copy of the guide can be downloaded from the following link:

<https://www.cieh.org/media/1244/guidance-on-fire-safety-provisions-for-certain-types-of-existing-housing.pdf>

Licences for landlords

Under the mandatory licensing scheme a HMO must be licensed if it is occupied by:

- five or more people
- who form two or more households and;
- who share a kitchen, bathroom or toilet facilities.

The licence ensures that the property is managed correctly and meets safety standards. However, even if your property doesn't meet the above criteria, you may still require a license as local councils can impose additional licenses. So the best thing to do is check with your local council to determine if a licence is required for your property – their contact details can be found on the back of this leaflet.

Checklist

- Complete a fire risk assessment and consider the fire precautions in the common areas and eliminate or reduce risks identified to the lowest possible level.
- Consider escape routes which may require the provision of a fire barrier between the common areas and the living accommodation to create a protected route to a place of ultimate safety. Escape routes should be maintained and kept free from obstruction.
- Consider the need for a fire detection and warning system and whether it should be extended into the living accommodation.
- Consider the need for emergency escape lighting.
- Consider firefighting equipment and facilities.
- Consider the need for signs and notices
- Consider recording, planning, informing, instructing and training which will require producing a fire action plan.

Think **FIRE**

Fire Risk Assessment - make sure your risk assessment has been completed, is suitable and sufficient and is reviewed regularly.

Inspire your residents and contractors to report any property defects or fire safety issues to you as soon as possible.

Record, repair and maintain fire safety equipment and any issues within your premises.

Evaluate your properties fire safety procedures regularly.

Responsibilities of the Resident

Wheelie bins

Don't make them a target.

Wheelie bins can be a fire hazard, not only from carelessly discarded hot items like cooking oil or smoking materials, but they are also a very real target for arsonists.

Don't store your wheelie bin by windows or doors because any fire in the bin could easily spread to your property, causing even more damage and endangering lives. Store your bin away, especially at night, in a secure area - behind locked gates if you can.



Bike and scooter storage including personal electric vehicles (PEVs)

Don't let them obstruct your escape.

Avoid storing or charging bikes, scooters or personal electric vehicles (e-bikes and e-scooters) on escape routes or in communal areas. If there's a fire, it can affect people's ability to escape.

For electric vehicles, it is important that you charge batteries whilst you are awake and alert so if a fire should occur you can respond quickly. Don't leave batteries to charge while you are asleep or away from the home.

Do not charge batteries or store your e-bike or e-scooter near combustible or flammable materials.



Door fastenings

Don't get locked in.

Final exit doors from HMOs should be easily openable from the inside without the use of a removable key. This also applies to exit doors from each bedsit or flat.

Internal thumb-turn locks should be used as these provide security for the property but also allow quick escape in the event of fire.



DO

- Become familiar with escape routes and exits from the building
- Unplug electrical appliances at night
- Close communal and bedroom doors, particularly when people are sleeping. Including during the day when those who may work nights would be sleeping
- Check for burning cigarettes before going to bed
- Keep storage to designated areas

DON'T

- Wedge open fire doors
- Remove door closing devices
- Tamper with fire alarms or equipment
- Overfill chip pans
- Leave children alone with matches or in rooms with cooking or heating appliances
- Smoke in bed
- Block halls and stairways

What to do in the event of a fire:

- **DO NOT attempt to fight fires that have already taken hold.** Evacuate yourself and your family from the house. If you share the house with other people sound the alarm as you make your escape.
- **DO NOT try to rescue belongings or pets.** Your life and the lives of your family are too precious too risk.
- **Telephone the Fire Service on 999 immediately from a place of safety.** Speak slowly and try to be calm answering the questions you are asked. If you think there may be someone left in the building then inform the 999 operator.
- **IF IN DOUBT, GET OUT!**

Contact your Local Housing Authority

If you have any fire safety concerns or queries please contact the relevant housing team via the contact details below, or alternatively, use the Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service contact details at the bottom of this page where your query will be forwarded to the relevant team.

Cheshire West and Chester Housing Standards



**Cheshire West
and Chester**

Email: housingstandards@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

Tel: 0300 123 7038

Cheshire East Housing Standards



Email: privatehousing@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Tel: 01270 685649

Warrington Housing Standards



WARRINGTON
Borough Council

Email: privatesector@warrington.gov.uk

Tel: 01925 443322

Halton Housing Standards



Email: environmental.protection@halton.gov.uk

Tel: 0303 333 4300

Keep up to date with what is happening in Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service:



www.cheshirefire.gov.uk/business-safety



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Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service



01606 868700



Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service
Sadler Road, Winsford
Cheshire CW7 2FQ

For FREE fire safety advice, visit our website or contact your local Prevention and Protection team:

Warrington & Halton



01925 634593



fireadvicewarrington@cheshirefire.gov.uk

Cheshire West & Chester



01244 322222



fireadvicecheshirewestandchester@cheshirefire.gov.uk

Cheshire East



01270 213246



fireadvicecheshireeast@cheshirefire.gov.uk

