



GIBRALTAR FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

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Fire Safety / Evacuation advice – High Rise Blocks of flats.

INTRODUCTORY INFORMATION

Fire Safety regulations allow **a single staircase** in blocks of flats. This is due to the general design of the building where every flat forms a fire compartment with fire resistant floors, walls and doors. Therefore this **single staircase** may form the means of escape in case of an emergency and fully complies with Fire Safety Regulations.

It is essential that the staircase is protected to prevent smoke from reaching the staircase. This protection is sometimes compromised by actions such as:

1. Illegal works inside the flats e.g. removal of corridors and/or fire doors which is the primary escape route.
2. Removal of self-closers to front doors of flats (these self-closers, although may be considered a nuisance by many tenants, ensures that if you leave your home during a fire the door closes behind you and smoke does not enter the staircase or lobby).
3. Fire doors leading to staircases being wedged open.
4. Obstructions and/or accumulation of combustible materials.

You must also consider that there are different designs for buildings, some may have an open balcony approach or some may have more than one staircase due to the distances involved with long open corridors. Other layouts may involve a central courtyard approach with a number of staircases.

Fire Detections and Alarms

There are two types of fire alarms to consider:

1. Firstly there are those inside your own flat. Many of the recently built buildings will have fire detection inside the flats. These need to be properly maintained by the occupiers, which most importantly includes checking the batteries and pressing the Test button. Many other flats will not have detection inside (as it was not a requirement when they were built). It is advisable to install your own detection for your own safety. These can be hard wired or battery operated. Further advice is available on the website www.gibfire.gi or contact our fire safety department. This will ensure that if there is a fire whilst you are sleeping or whilst you are in a different room, it will alert you at an early stage.
2. Secondly there is detection and alarms in the communal areas e.g. staircase or corridors. This detection is NOT a requirement. An alarm in a communal staircase or corridor will not guarantee that it will be heard if you are sleeping in a bedroom. The decibel level can only be set to a “legal” limit. Usually this system would complement a door to door evacuation initiated by the Fire and Rescue Service. This is why the “Stay Put” policy described below often applies.

WHAT TO DO IF THERE IS A FIRE IN YOUR FLAT

- Leave the room where the fire is straight away, and then close the door.
- Inform everyone in your home and get them to leave the flat.
- Close the front door of your flat behind you. If at all possible close windows before leaving.
- Do not stay behind to put the fire out (unless safe and trained to do so).
- Always use the stairs, DO NOT use the lifts.
- Call the Gibraltar Fire and Rescue Service on Tel: 190 and wait outside, well away from the building.

WHAT TO DO IF THERE IS A FIRE ELSEWHERE IN YOUR BLOCK OF FLATS

- High Rise buildings are designed to contain a fire in the flat where it starts.
- High Rise flats are built to delay the spread of fire for up to one hour.
- This means it will usually be safe for you to stay in your own flat if the fire is elsewhere. This is the “stay put policy”. Close doors and windows.
- You must leave immediately if smoke or heat affects your home, or if you are told to by the Fire and Rescue Service.
- **However, if you are in any Doubt, and it is safe to do so, Get Out.**

**In case of
Emergency
DIAL
190**

For further fire safety advice, contact the Fire Safety Department:

Tel: 20072936

Email: firesafety@gibfire.gi

Website: www.gibfire.gi