

A photograph of a woman with long blonde hair, seen from the back, holding a young child. The child is looking over the woman's shoulder towards the camera. They are standing in front of a large wooden door with glass panes. To the left, there are patterned curtains. The scene is indoors, likely a home entrance.

**FIRE EVACUATION POLICIES**

**AND PROCEDURES**

***FireAngel***®



# INTRODUCTION

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As seen in the Fire Statistics England report, there were around 529,000 incidents attended by fire and rescue services (FRS) in 2015/16. As this is a 7% increase from 2014-15, this demonstrates that there is still a vital need for a heightened awareness and implementation of fire safety.



This is particularly important in domestic premises, as the majority of fire-related fatalities (76%) and casualties (75%) occur there. With this in mind, the following booklet is suitable for use by all residents, outlining fire evacuation policies and procedures that are dependent on type of property and circumstances.





## PLAN AND REHEARSE

### WHAT TO DO IN THE EVENT OF A FIRE



Make sure you plan and rehearse your escape route with your family/other residents. This ensures that everyone in the household will know what to do in an emergency, for example, a smoke alarm sounding in the middle of the night.



Make sure the planned escape route remains free of any obstructions - identify exits and agree on a meeting point in event of fire. Practise your fire escape route regularly, ensuring you have a secondary plan just in case your original route is blocked.

# WHAT TO DO IN THE EVENT OF FIRE

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If a smoke alarm is heard or a fire is detected, you need to act quickly and calmly



Alert everyone in the household



If there's smoke, keep low. Smoke and hot gases rise, so the air will be clearer low down.



Always keep window and door keys where everyone can find them on the planned escape route.



Make sure you check doorknobs with the back of your hand before opening them - the fire could be on the other side.



Get out of the house as quickly as possible, closing all doors behind you. Follow a planned escape route and never use a lift - proceed down the stairs.



Don't try to pick up valuables or possessions.

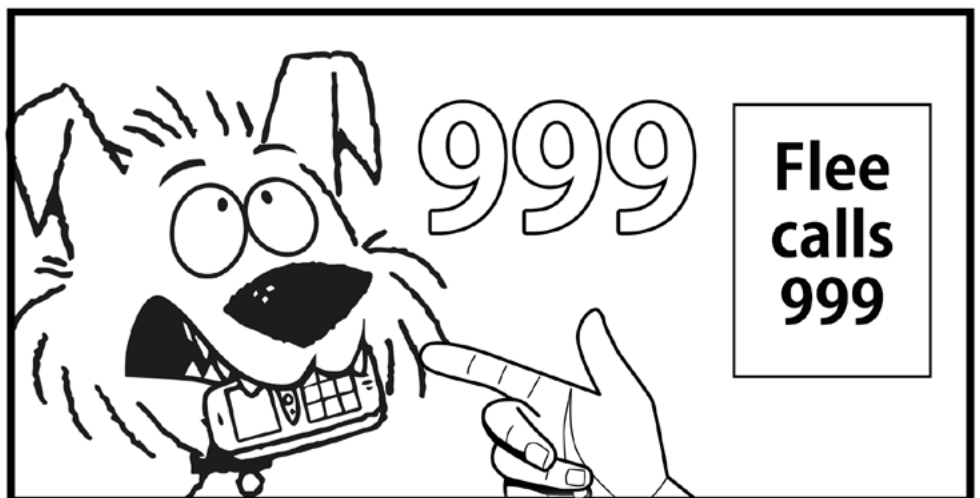
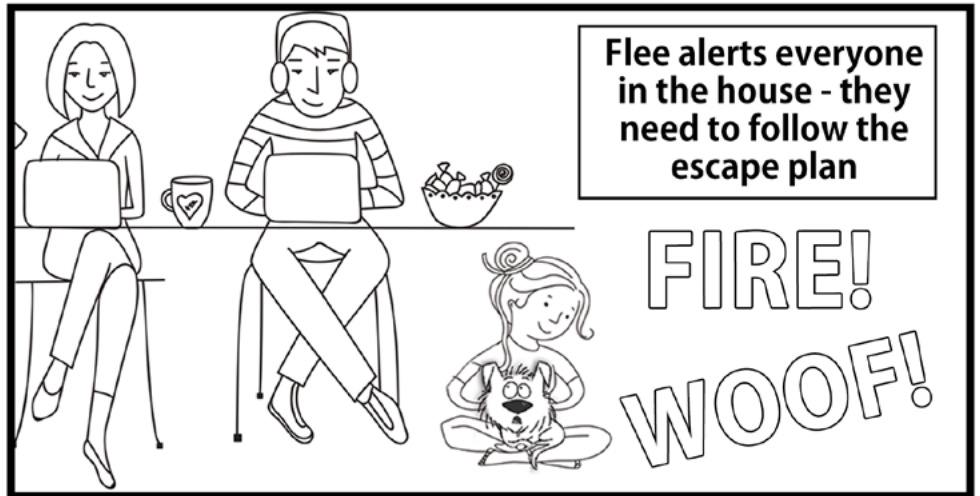
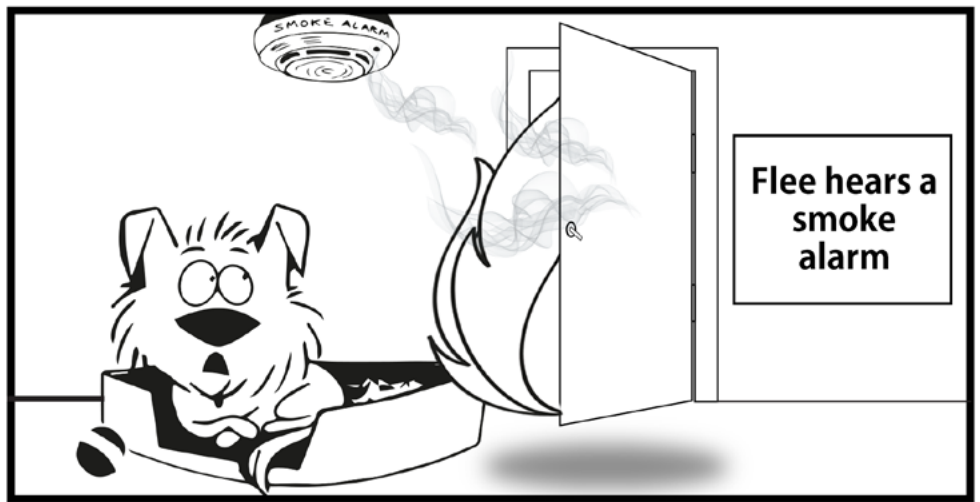


"Get out, stay out and call 999" - Call the fire service on 999 as soon as possible from outside your house.



Never go back into your home until a fire fighter has said it is safe to do so.

PRINT OFF AND  
COLOUR ME IN!





# EVACUATION IN A PURPOSE -BUILT

## MAISONETTE OR A BLOCK OF FLATS

A primary resource to refer to here is the Local Government Association's (LGA) 'Fire safety in purpose-built blocks of flats' document. In part B. 16-18, this guide outlines how blocks of flats differ from other residences, with particular regards to compartmentation and the evacuation strategy.

Compartmentation is, essentially, the fire separation between flats and communal areas that makes each flat a fire-resisting enclosure. As a result of this, a fire will normally burn itself out within the flat of origin before spreading to other parts of the building. Therefore in the majority of fires in blocks of flats, residents in flats remote from the fire are safe to stay where they are - this is the essence of the 'stay put' principle.

## EVACUATION IN A PURPOSE-BUILT MAISONETTE OR A BLOCK OF FLATS

As outlined in the LGA document, the 'stay put' policy involves the following:



When a fire occurs within a flat, the residents alert everyone else in the flat, then make their way out of the building and summon the fire and rescue service (FRS), giving as much information as you can.



If a fire starts in the common parts of the building - e.g. communal kitchens, stairways or landings - then anyone in these areas needs to make their way out of the building and summon the Fire & Rescue Services.



All other residents that are not directly affected by the fire would be expected to 'stay put', and so remain in their flat unless directed to leave by the FRS.

It is important to note that it is *not* implied that those who wish to leave the building - even if not directly involved by fire should not be prevented from doing so.

An alternate to a 'stay put' policy is a 'simultaneous evacuation', whereby residents are evacuated from a number of flats together. This requires a fire detection, alarm system (or similar) that can alert all the residents at once that they need to evacuate. This procedure is sometimes applied to converted blocks of flats, or in circumstances where it is not possible to achieve a level of compartmentation required for a 'stay put' policy.

If you live in rented accommodation in a purpose-built maisonette or a block of flats and are unsure of the fire safety policy and procedures, then make sure you consult your landlord, housing provider or managing agent. Alternatively you can contact your local FRS or housing authority.



# WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE CUT OFF BY FIRE

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As outlined in the LGA document, the 'stay put' policy involves the following:



Keep doors and windows closed and get everyone to the safest room with a window, that is furthest away from the smoke/heat entry point.



If you are unable to call the fire service, open the window, try to attract the attention of others who can alert the fire brigade, shout FIRE!



Close the door and put bedding or any soft materials around the bottom and sides to block the smoke coming in.



If you're on the ground or first floor, you may be able to escape through the window. Use soft materials to cushion your fall and always lower yourself down slowly and carefully. Get out feet first and lower yourself until your arms are fully extended before dropping.





# TENANTS WITH A DISABILITY

## WHAT TO DO IN THE EVENT OF FIRE

Disabled tenants should have fire safety devices and procedures in place to consider their requirements in the event of fire. For example, if a tenant is hard of hearing, then strobes and vibrating pad devices will likely be a better warning than an auditory fire alarm.

Otherwise, if a tenant has mobility difficulties it is advisable to have a bedroom on the ground floor or, if this is not possible, have it as close to the nearest exit as possible.

If you personally need assistance during your escape, or know of someone who will, it is vital that you have some means of summoning help in your home, such as a buzzer, intercom or telephone by your bed. There are also available systems that can automatically summon help or send a signal to an appropriate control room. For more information on these systems, we'd recommend seeing Disabled Living Foundation resources, or downloading HM Government's Means of Escape for Disabled People.



## CONCLUSION

### WHAT TO DO IN THE EVENT OF A FIRE

It is fundamental that, upon hearing a fire alarm or discovering a fire in your home, that everyone in the domestic premises knows the standard procedures and fire escape plan. Even if you have very young children, you cannot ensure that you will always be with them, so they need to be educated and aware of what to do in different fire events. For more information, please see the “How to educate young children about fire safety” in the FireAngel blog.

Alternatively, if you are a landlord or tenant living in rented accommodation, we would recommend downloading part 1 of this eBook, which includes fire safety checklists for the home.





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