



WGHC

Our tenants are paramount in everything we do

FIRE SAFETY POLICY

This policy was approved by the Committee of Management on Wednesday 19th February 2025. It should be reviewed again no later than 31st January 2028, or as legislation changes that could affect the terms of this policy.

The policy has been assessed through the organisational impact assessment process.

We can, if requested, produce this document in different formats such as larger print or audio-format. We can also translate the document into various languages, as appropriate.

SCOTTISH HOUSING REGULATOR STANDARDS

STANDARD 1

The governing body leads and directs the RSL to achieve good outcomes for its tenants and other service users.

STANDARD 2

The RSL is open about and accountable for what it does. It understands and takes account of the needs and priorities of its tenants, service users and stakeholders. Its primary focus is the sustainable achievement of these priorities.

STANDARD 3

The RSL manages its resources to ensure its financial well-being, while maintaining rents at a level that tenants can afford to pay.

STANDARD 4

The Governing body bases its decisions on good quality information and advice and identifies and mitigates risks to the organisation's purpose.

STANDARD 5

The RSL conducts its affairs with honesty and integrity.

STANDARD 6

The Governing body and senior officers have the skills and knowledge they need to be effective.

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West Granton Housing Co-operative Limited is a fully mutual housing co-operative registered as a social landlord with the Scottish Housing Regulator (HAC 225); and is a registered society under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014 (2357 RS).



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

West Granton Housing Co-operative (WGHC) is committed to reducing any risk from fire to as low as reasonably practicable.

Our primary objective is to minimise the risk of incidence of fire and the impact of fire on the life, safety, delivery of service, the environment and property.

We want to ensure that as far as possible fires and unwanted fire signals do not occur.

However, if a fire occurs, it should be rapidly detected, effectively contained, and quickly extinguished by sound planning, rapid and effective response. WGHC recognises its responsibilities and duties under the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 and Fire Safety (Scotland) Regulations 2006 both as an employer and landlord.

This Fire Safety Policy applies to all premises and dwellings which are, to any extent, under the control of (WGHC) as a landlord or employer – this includes our office, bungalows, houses and flats, especially, any flats in excess of 11 metres in height. Its requirements extend to all persons at those premises including customers, staff, visitors and contractors.

Line managers are responsible for ensuring that staff members are aware of and understand this policy and any subsequent revisions.

To provide a safe environment, fire safety arrangements must ensure that suitable and sufficient fire safety measures are in place.

These are routinely monitored, including:

- ❖ all properties having the required systems in place to achieve full and compliant fire safety standards;
- ❖ staff being familiar with what action to take in the event of a fire;
- ❖ conducting periodic audits of the effectiveness of management structures and risk controls for fire safety;
- ❖ eliminating or reducing harmful substances that could increase risks in the event of a fire outbreak;
- ❖ having effective systems in place for routinely monitoring and recording fire safety, with details recorded in the fire logbook;
- ❖ having effective systems in place for routinely maintaining fire safety standards; and
- ❖ compliance with legal duties, regulatory requirements and good practice standards.

As a landlord WGHC will take every reasonable precaution to ensure the safety of our tenants by both physical fire safety measures and providing and maintaining linked smoke & heat detectors in every property we manage (Fire Scotland Regulation 2022).

2.0 FIRE SAFETY PLANNING

As part of our fire safety arrangements, we will have a local Fire Safety Plan that includes properties owned and managed by WGHC in excess of 11 metres in height.

Our principal concern within any premises is risk to life, so we look to preserve life by ensuring that all building users are protected from the effects of fire and that in the event of fire, they can be evacuated safely and quickly to a place of safety.

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If we can preserve life, then a degree of property protection can also be achieved, as action can be taken to either facilitate first-aid firefighting and/ or summon the fire service to deal with a fire.

If the above objectives are met, then WGHC will also be able to maintain full or partial service delivery and minimise any environmental impact resulting from a fire.

For a fire safety plan to be effective, the following general principles should apply:

- ❖ Prevent the outbreak of fire through comprehensive fire safety management, good housekeeping, and effective management of unavoidable risks within the built environment.
- ❖ Continue to invest in the housing estate, office premises, and people to maintain an appropriate level of fire safety.
- ❖ If fire safety / risk management measures fail, look to contain the fire and limit spread.
- ❖ Ensure that sufficient fire precautions and systems are provided on a risk-based approach relating to the current risk assessment and in accordance with the relevant standards
- ❖ Provide suitable and sufficient training for all staff
- ❖ Ensure suitable means are in place for detecting fire and giving warning
- ❖ As far as is possible, premises are divided into compartments to restrict the spread of smoke and flame.
- ❖ Escape routes are wide enough and exits can be opened without the need of a key.
- ❖ Provide suitable and sufficient first-aid fire-fighting equipment appropriate to the risk.

We will promote our Fire Safety Policy through our newsletter, website and tenancy handbook. Where we plan to make significant changes to the policy, we will consult tenants in line with our tenant engagement strategy.

3.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The WGHC Committee of Management is responsible for the conduct of the business of the organisation.

WGHC's Committee of Management, Senior Officers and all other WGHC staff recognise that health and safety is a fundamental part of the safe, efficient and effective delivery of service.

There are key legislative and statutory requirements as well as guidance, which relate to how we manage fire safety. Staff need to be aware of these and any relevant revisions so they apply and follow current legislation, regulations and guidance.

The Senior Team meets quarterly having a Health & Safety meeting, with its remit and agenda aligned to focus on the Scottish Housing Regulator's priorities in relation to tenant and resident health and safety. As such, the Panel's focus is on providing assurance on our compliance with relevant safety requirements, including gas safety; electrical safety; water safety; fire safety; asbestos; damp and mould; and lift safety.

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This Fire Safety Policy is linked to other WGHC policies, including:

- ❖ Health & Safety Policy;
- ❖ Health & Safety Control Manual;
- ❖ Gas Safety Policy (and procedure);
- ❖ Legionella and Water Management Policy;
- ❖ Management of Damp, Mould & Condensation Policy (and procedure);
- ❖ Planned Maintenance Policy (and procedure);
- ❖ Reactive Maintenance Policy (and procedure);
- ❖ Risk Management Policy; and
- ❖ Staff Policy.

Overall responsibility for ensuring this policy is put into practice rests with the CEO who delegates key tasks to the COO who is responsible for day-to-day oversight of the implementation of the policy and associated procedures.

WGHC is committed to our responsibilities as a good employer and attaining a high standard of health and safety performance in the delivery of services. This will be achieved by:

- ❖ creating and maintaining a positive health and safety culture which ensures the commitment and participation of all staff;
- ❖ meeting its responsibilities to staff, to other persons, and to the environment in a way which recognises that legal requirements are the minimum standard; and
- ❖ adopting a planned and systematic approach to the implementation of WGHC's Health & Safety Policy.

4.0 MAINTAINING ADEQUATE LEVELS OF FIRE SAFETY

WGHC will undertake a programme of risk assessment and fire safety checks/ inspections. We will formally assess 'relevant premises' (usually those in excess of 11metres in height, although not, necessarily, exclusively) – we will review the risk assessment annually or when material alterations, refurbishments or changes of use take place.

Linked to the fire risk assessments, WGHC will instal and satisfactorily maintain an adequate level of physical fire precautions designed to prevent the occurrence, ensure the detection, and minimise the spread of fires.

5.0 FIRE RISK ASSESSMENTS

Where fire safety legislation applies, WGHC must ensure that premises-specific fire risk assessments are carried out and made available.

Fire risk assessments must:

- ❖ be carried out by a competent person (i.e. a person who has sufficient experience or knowledge and other qualities);
- ❖ reflect the premises' use and occupation;
- ❖ record significant findings, such as measures required to control the risks from smoke and fire including those which are already in place, those planned and any requirements/ recommendations for further improvement; and
- ❖ be a 'working document', kept under review and regularly updated at least annually.

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WGHC will usually engage suitably qualified external third parties to undertake any/all Fire Risk Assessments (Chartered Fire Engineers / Chartered Building Surveyors) or equivalent.

6.0 RECORD KEEPING / COMPLIANCE

The compliance area of WGHC's CRM (Blazor) will include details of:

fire exits, firefighting equipment, fire alarm, emergency lighting, smoke/heat detectors, fire doors and other safety measures. These will be kept in efficient working order and covered by a system of testing and maintenance, managed by the Maintenance Team. Records must be kept up to date with the details of all tests maintained. Any defects must be actioned as quickly as possible. Urgency Indicators for any works in this area must be considered Emergency or Urgent.

The Maintenance Team are to maintain documentation that includes premises details (including drawings and site plans); fire system and equipment inventory; fire classifications & fire extinguishers; fire alarm testing record; emergency lighting testing record; firefighting equipment testing record; automatic sprinkler testing record; fire drills/evacuation record; fire door check records; staff fire training records; current fire risk assessment; current annual fire extinguisher inspection; evacuation procedures, etc.

6.1 Common areas

Where we are the owner of common areas of domestic premises, or have control of the common areas, it is our regulatory duty to ensure that we maintain facilities such as equipment and devices for the use by or protection of fire fighters - this includes emergency lighting, smoke detectors, smoke actuators and dry risers.

This requirement only applies to a limited number of our flats where such facilities are part of the design in accordance with Building Regulations. These blocks require to be assessed and regular checks carried out.

However, there is no requirement to install retrospectively, maintain or carry out fire risk assessments for older housing stock or flats under 11 metres in height.

In broad terms landlords are responsible for matters within their control and must maintain such systems of apparatus to ensure that they are fully operational and in good working order.

Landlords therefore need to provide assurance that their maintenance regime is reasonable and proportionate. Based upon professional advice, set out below is a summary of how we will carry out fire risk assessments in relation to emergency lighting, smoke detectors and smoke actuators.

6.2 Emergency lighting

Annual testing will be carried out to make sure that the batteries are run down for 3 hours and then will accept a recharge. We will also check that all lamps, which are deemed to be emergency lighting lamps, are functional. Also, on a six month basis we will activate the emergency lighting and carry out a lamp check. Monthly checks will be completed by a trained staff member or appointed contractor.

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6.3 Smoke detectors within communal blocks

These will be checked every 6 months to make sure that the system functions as designed and is in good working order.

6.4 Smoke actuators

These will be checked every 6 months to make sure that the battery backups are holding their charge and that the system functions properly by an appointed contractor

6.5 Dry risers

These will be checked every 6 months to make sure that the system functions properly and is in good working order.

6.4 Gas Safety

Properties that have a gas supply have a valid Gas Safety Certificate in place checked annually.

6.5 EICR

A valid EICR certificate is in place in all properties valid for 5 years

7.0 TRAINING

WGHC is legally responsible for ensuring that staff are adequately trained in fire safety issues. We provide training as part of induction for new staff and refresher training for all staff at least once a year. We also provide specific training for our designated Fire Wardens. We keep records of all fire training provided.

8.0 EMERGENCY PLANNING

8.1 Fire Evacuation Plan

A Fire Evacuation Plan, prepared by a competent person, ensures that people in the premises know what to do if there is a fire and that they can be safely evacuated. It will be reviewed annually, or more frequently if there is a significant change to the premises, use of premises or the people we support.

8.2 Fire Action Notices

Fire Action Notices must be displayed giving everyone, including visitors, clear instructions of what to do in an emergency.

They should be provided throughout premises, where relevant, and should be located by each manual call point; by exits into staircases or from buildings; in areas where large numbers of people congregate, such as meeting rooms, and on staff or Health & Safety notice Committee of Managements.

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Fire Action Notices must be backed up with a clear written evacuation procedure to be followed by all staff and tailored to the nature and requirements of the individual sites.

Written procedures will include reference to what to do on discovering a fire; how to raise the alarm; safe evacuation of premises; nominated Fire Wardens; summoning the Fire & Rescue Service; and designated key holders for premises and out of hours contacts, etc.

8.3 Fire Drills

The main objective of the Emergency Plan will be to achieve a rapid and effective response to all fire alarms and fire emergencies to safeguard life and property. Staff must regularly participate in fire drills to remind them of their duties and to evaluate the effectiveness of the Emergency Plan.

Office fire drills should be held at least twice each year. All fire drills must be recorded, including the time taken to carry out the evacuation. We aim to evacuate all occupants from a protected area to a place of reasonable or total safety within two and a half minutes of the alarm being raised.

9.0 PERSONAL EMERGENCY EVACUATIONS PLANS (PEEPs)

Where WGHC know or believe that a tenant is either at risk, vulnerable or disabled, it is the responsibility of the Maintenance Team to ensure that each such persons is fully assessed for any additional requirements or support in evacuating the building. These details should also be recorded on the WGHC CRM, Blazor.

10.0 MAINTENANCE: CHECKS & TESTS

Maintenance, checks and tests include, site visits and walk rounds by trained staff along with all fire equipment to be checked, serviced with the equipment label indicating the date it has been maintained. The service date required (Annual, bio annual, quarterly, monthly weekly), is determined by current regulations and location of the equipment (Office, Common Areas, and any other premises owned by WGHC). The check and maintenance of the fire equipment must be completed and carried out by a competent person.

Checks should include fire exit doors and exit routes (internal and external); fire signage; commons areas and exits being clear of rubbish; testing and maintaining emergency lighting and lightening protection systems; EICRs are in date and the electrical system complies with current standards; fire alarms, fire detection and warning systems, fire alarms, smoke vents, car park ventilations system, dry risers, automatic doors and other installed systems have been maintained and tested; structural fire protection and fire compartmentation have been inspected and remedial action completed; fire doors are in good order; and Fire Risk Assessments have been carried out, with all priority works actioned.

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11.0 REPORTING FIRE INCIDENTS & UNWANTED FIRE SIGNALS

All fire incidents and false alarms must be formally reported. WGHC is legally obliged to manage all automatic fire alarm / detection systems; ensure that the numbers of Unwanted Fire Signals are kept to minimum; and investigate and take remedial action where systems frequently give Unwanted Fire Signals.

WGHC uses an external third party agent, Key Holding Response to physically respond to all fire alarm activations within the Forth Quarter flats (in excess of 11 metres in height)

12.0 PROJECT DESIGN & BUILDING WORKS

There may be increased risk of fire during construction work. All parties must therefore consider their obligations under the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 and other relevant health and safety legislation.

Any project design and building works must have adequate provision of fire safety measures and this must be included in the Construction Phase Plan. Effective contractor selection must ensure that the designer is competent and understands the various legislative requirements placed upon them.

The Principal Contractor must ensure that:

- ❖ procedures are in place to guarantee that all necessary precautions against fire are taken and produce a Fire Safety Plan for the areas under their direct control; and
- ❖ maintain regular contact with WGHC's project manager to confirm compliance with the Fire Safety Policy, Construction Phase Plan and other health and safety requirements.

13.0 MONITORING & REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed by the Committee of Management every three years or sooner if required by statutory or regulatory requirements.

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APPENDIX 1

Legislation & Statutory Requirements, including:

- ❖ Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974
- ❖ Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 1994
- ❖ Health & Safety (Safety Signs & Signals) Regulations 1996
- ❖ Gas Safety (Installation & Use) Regulations 1998 (as amended)
- ❖ Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, 2006, 2010 & 2014
- ❖ The Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 2002
- ❖ The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002
- ❖ Fire (Scotland) Act 2005
- ❖ Fire Safety (Scotland) Regulations 2006
- ❖ Equality Act 2010
- ❖ Construction (Design & Management) Regulations 2015
- ❖ The Building (Scotland) Regulations & Building Standards 2017
- ❖ Scottish Housing Regulator Regulatory Framework 2024
- ❖ Tolerable Standard
- ❖ Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS)
- ❖ Repairing Standard

Guidance, including:

- ❖ BS 5839-6 (fire detection)
- ❖ BS 5499 (fire safety signs)
- ❖ Scottish Government Existing High-Rise Domestic Buildings: Practical Guidance (2022)
- ❖ The Social Housing Safety Network Scotland: Fire Safety
- ❖ EVH Landlord Safety Manual

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