

DORSET & WILTSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE
Interim Guidance Note (IGN)

IGN 2/2018

Stay Put or Total Evacuation in High Rise Building

To be used in conjunction with Fire Residential Buildings High Rise TOG F3.1.0

Response (RE)

Following high rise fires where the building does not necessarily behave in the way that is expected, residents have become aware of and concerned about staying put during a fire, the following guidance is provided for Incident Commanders and Service Control Centre on this subject.

The Fire Residential Buildings High Rise - TOG F3.1.0 will be reviewed when national guidance on this subject is updated. This note will be incorporated into the new guidance, which is expected in 2018.

This document supersedes IGN 6/2017 High Rise Guidance Amendment.

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1 Context

- 1.1 A fire within a flat within a high-rise building is designed to be contained within the flat through a range of passive (compartmentation, fire doors etc) and active (Sprinklers, smoke ventilation etc) fire protection measures.
- 1.2 Over time a buildings fire protection measures may be altered, affecting the level of protection it should afford the occupants and fire crews. These alterations may include:
 - Replacement of fire doors with lesser standard doors
 - Legacy fire doors not complying with modern standards
 - Alteration by occupants of fire doors (cat flaps etc)
 - Addition of flammable cladding externally,
 - Removal of, or poorly fitted fire resisting compartment barriers
 - Fitting of pipes and cables within common areas breaching the compartmentation
 - Fire loading in corridors and common areas (Mobility scooters as an example).

- 1.3 As Building Regulations are not retrospective, a legacy high-rise building compared with a similar new build may produce differing standards of fire resistance and therefore performance during a fire. On this basis no two buildings are likely to behave in the same way during a fire.
- 1.4 It is likely that the residents of a building will not be aware if a stay put policy exists and even if they know, they may be reluctant to adhere to this.
- 1.5 Typically, a high-rise building may not have a common fire alarm system, therefore the ability to alert all occupants of a building or for a fire situation to be communicated to occupants may present issues for operational crews.
- 1.6 Considering all the above, the following guidance is suggested when Control or Managers at scene become aware that a fire has spread beyond the compartment of origin and potentially conflicts with a stay put policy.

2 Incident ground considerations

2.1 Prior to committing crews Incident Commanders (ICs) should:

- Establish what the planned evacuation strategy is for the building (consult SSRI document, fire action notices or other building information)
- Nominate a suitably competent crew member to undertake the function of External Safety Observer, specifically briefed to identify and report immediately any external fire spread, evidence of wind driven fires and falling debris.
- Brief crews and managers entering the building to be aware of and to report any instances where a fire has breached a flat compartment or where unusual fire development is observed.
- Complete an Analytical Risk Assessment (ARA), capturing the evacuation strategy if known and confirming that this is still an appropriate strategy.

2.2 If a fire appears to have breached the compartment and is likely to further develop to other flats and threatens the means of escape for residents:

- Immediately alert the Service Control Centre that an evacuation of the building is considered necessary.
- Communicate this to all personnel on the incident ground, including any representatives from that building and other relevant agencies present.
- Record the decision that an evacuation of the residents is required (via an informative message to Service Control Centre and a Decision Log at the scene).
- Brief Lobby and Bridgehead personnel that residents may be self-evacuating through their scene of operations.
- Consider taking a roll call of persons evacuating, to log which flats have been vacated. Good practice would suggest a dedicated team is appointed to task.
- Consider, where safe to do so, deploying fire crews to assist with the evacuation of residents. Prioritising those considered at greatest risk first.
- Consider using common fire alarm systems to assist with warning residents.
- Ensure that a new ARA is compiled reflecting and confirming the evacuation circumstances.
- Consider whether the incident is of a sufficient nature to declare a Major Incident.

- Consider using the message Mnemonic (M)ETHANE for messages.

3 Service Control Centre

3.1 If Service Control Centre are alerted from the incident ground that an evacuation of the building is necessary, they must:

- Advise any subsequent callers that, if it is safe to do so, they should attempt to exit the building using the nearest safe route
- Note the flat number of callers exiting the building and advise the incident ground of each instance, giving as many location and occupant details as is practicable
- Consider requesting a Control Room Advisor (CRA) to attend Control to assist with the logistics and recording involved
- Provide fire survival guidance to those unable to leave their flat, and ensure the IC is informed of these locations

3.2 If Service Control Centre receive information from callers or other agencies that a fire appears to be breaching the compartment of origin, they must:

- Inform the IC of the information and the location of the caller
- If the caller is still within the building, advise that if safe to do so, they leave the building or if unable to, provide fire survival guidance and inform the IC
- If the caller believes themselves to be in a hazardous position, advise them to leave the building using the nearest safe route. This also applies to any subsequent callers that believe themselves to be at risk

4 Document Management

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