

New planning requirements on fire safety come into force

- New fire safety planning requirements have come into effect for relevant developments involving high-rise residential buildings
- Follows expert recommendation for fire safety to be considered at planning application stage
- Part of biggest changes to building safety regulation in 40 years

Residents will be safer in their homes thanks to new planning requirements that come into force this week (1 August 2021).

The new requirements, known as planning gateway one, will ensure that high-rise developments consider fire safety at the earliest stages of planning.

Developments involving high-rise residential buildings must demonstrate they have been designed with fire safety in mind before planning permission is granted – including through their site layout – and with access provided for fire engines.

This information will be submitted as part of the planning application in a fire statement.

Housing Minister Rt Hon Christopher Pincher MP said:

This is a key step in our progress towards a new, risk-based building safety regime that will ensure fire safety is prioritised at every stage in the development of high-rise buildings.

I am pleased to appoint the Health and Safety Executive as the statutory consultee, which will be on-hand to provide their expertise to local planning authorities on these important fire safety elements.

We are driving up the standards of safety for people's homes and our new regulator – to be introduced under the Building Safety Bill – will provide this essential oversight, from a building's initial design, to providing homes in the future.

Local planning authorities must seek specialist advice on relevant applications from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), as the statutory consultee on fire safety, before a decision is made on the application.

In future, this role is likely to become part of the new Building Safety Regulator – which, led by HSE, will oversee a new safety regime for high-rise residential homes.

Peter Baker, Chief Inspector of Buildings, at Health and Safety Executive

said:

The introduction of planning gateway one is an important milestone in the journey to radically reform building safety so that residents are safe, and feel safe, in their homes.

It will ensure that fire safety is considered from the very beginning of a building's life and that developments benefit from integrated thinking on fire safety.

The Health and Safety Executive is now a statutory consultee for planning applications involving relevant high-rise residential buildings and will apply risk-based fire safety knowledge and expertise to evaluate planning applications. This will enable local planning authorities to make sound and informed decisions.

The changes to planning requirements follow a key recommendation made by Dame Judith Hackitt that fire safety in high-rise buildings should be considered at the earliest possible stage in the planning process, as set out in her panel's independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety.

It marks one of the first steps in the government's major overhaul of building safety regulation. On 5 July 2021 the Housing Secretary introduced the [Building Safety Bill](#) that will set a clear pathway for improved standards on how residential buildings should be constructed and maintained.

Planning gateway one will:

- involve the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) becoming a statutory consultee before permission is granted on certain developments which involve high-rise residential buildings
- help to inform effective decision-making by local planning authorities to ensure safety needs of the local community are met.

See the [guidance on planning gateway one](#).

See the [new fire statement forms for planning gateway one](#).

Certain planning applications will be [exempt from the new requirement to submit a fire statement](#).

Pre-application advice can be found on the [HSE website](#).