



Fire Safety Information

August 2019



Be smart

Part 1



What should I do in the event of a fire?

In the unlikely event a fire occurs in your building, you need to be aware of the action you should take.

Your building is designed with a number of fire safety measures to ensure in the unlikely event of a fire it is detected as early as possible. These measures should allow you time to take action, limit the spread of fire within the building and protect others until the fire and rescue service arrives to deal with the situation.

Your home has a smoke detection system in it which is for your protection only. If a fire occurs in your home your detector will sound an alarm to alert you.

If you are alerted to a fire in your home, the following action should be taken:



1. Stay calm, act quickly and leave the room where the fire is straight away and close the door



2. Make sure everyone in your home is alerted to the fire



3. Leave your home, ensuring you close the door behind you



4. Evacuate the building via the nearest available exit



5. Once safely outside and away from the building call the fire brigade by dialling 999 to inform them of the fire



6. Wait outside at a safe distance from the building.

- **Do not attempt to tackle a fire yourself**
- **Do not stop to collect personal belongings**
- **Do not attempt to re-enter the building until you are notified it is safe to do so.**

If you are not able to leave your home then you should:



1. Go to a room as far from the fire as possible and close the door



2. Dial 999, give the address of the building including the number of your flat and the floor on which it is located



3. State there is a fire in your home and you are not able to evacuate



4. Use towels or bedding at the bottom of the door to block the smoke from entering the room you are in.

If you are in the communal area and discover a fire you should:

- EXIT** 1. Evacuate the building via the nearest available exit
- 999** 2. Once safely outside and away from the building call the fire brigade by dialling 999 to inform them of the fire
-  3. Wait outside at a safe distance from the building.

If you are in your home and you are made aware of a fire in another part of the building, it is usually safer to remain in your own home. However, if your home is affected by heat or smoke and you are safe to do so then you should attempt to evacuate the building by the nearest available exit.

If you remain in your home, the fire and rescue service will provide on-site advice regarding evacuation should this be needed.

Top tip:

Make sure you know your escape route and where your nearest emergency exit is in the case of a fire.



Part 2



Communal area housekeeping

A fire occurring in a block of flats can endanger the safety of all the people in it, therefore it is vital we ensure communal areas are managed effectively to ensure the risk of a fire occurring is minimised.

To help achieve this we will ensure **all communal areas** are managed effectively and kept free from obstructions or hazards to protect the health and safety of our customers and other users of our buildings.

This guidance applies to customers and leaseholders of Beyond Housing and their visitors. Customers and leaseholders will be **held responsible** for any breaches of this procedure by their visitors.

Definitions

A communal area is any area not within the confines of the customer's property. Such areas include:

- Corridors
- Stairways
- Landings
- Lobbies
- Meter/store cupboards
- Entrances to the building
- External gardens and bin stores
- Garages and parking areas.

The Communities team is responsible for providing guidance and advice and for enforcing tenancy agreements.

What are my responsibilities?

The area outside your property is a communal area and should not be used as an extension to your home. Communal areas should not be used for storage of your personal effects.

You are responsible for ensuring the area immediately outside your home adheres to the communal standards and you have a shared responsibility for any general communal area in the building. Leaseholders also have the same shared responsibilities.

Customers and leaseholders must ensure:

- Fire escapes and general access routes are kept clear at all times
- Communal areas including store cupboards, meter rooms and bin rooms are not used to store or dispose of personal items
- Fire doors are not propped or wedged open. These fire doors are designed to stop the spread of smoke and fire

- Door closers are not removed from flat entrance doors. If closers are damaged these should be reported immediately to our Service Centre by calling 0345 065 5656
- Wheelie bins are not placed directly adjacent to the building or fire exits.

What items can I store/place in the communal area?

The only items which are permitted to be stored in communal areas are:

- A thin, non-slip doormat (not a section of carpet). All other non-conforming mats will be removed as they present a trip hazard in the event of an emergency
- Picture(s) or notice boards if they are secured to the wall and enclosed in glass or Perspex. It is not permitted to hang pictures on a string. Permission must be sought from the Communities team before affixing any item to a communal wall.

What items are prohibited from being placed in communal areas?

All items other than those mentioned above are **prohibited** from being stored or displayed in any communal area. The below list is an example of items that must not be placed in a communal area:

- Mobility scooters
- Motorbikes or other petrol powered equipment such as lawnmowers

- Pushchairs, buggies, prams etc.
- Furniture
- Bedding or mattresses
- Washing machines, fridges, freezers
- Portable electrical goods, TVs, music players etc.
- Washing lines or clothes dryers (in enclosed corridors and staircases)
- Bicycles (in enclosed corridors and staircases)
- Fuel containers or gas bottles (including oxygen bottles)
- Shopping trolleys
- Lockers, bookcases
- General rubbish, black bags of rubbish, bundles of newspapers or clothing etc.
- Carpets or rugs
- Festive decorations (Christmas trees, lights etc.)
- Gardening equipment
- Barbecues.

What is Beyond Housing doing?

- Beyond Housing will undertake a periodic review of the fire risk assessment of the communal and shared areas to identify any issues of concern
- Our caretakers and communities advisors will carry out regular inspections of communal areas to ensure they are free from fire risks and obstructions
- The fire authority may also carry out an inspection of the communal areas to ensure they are in a safe condition.

Whilst customer safety is paramount, we will adopt a common sense approach when carrying out inspections. For example, it is reasonable for a parent to leave a pram at the base of the staircase (out of the way in an alcove) for a few hours, however, it would be unreasonable for the pram to be left overnight or permanently stored there.

Where communal areas are provided with emergency lighting, smoke or heat detectors and electrical equipment, servicing of these items will take place in accordance with statutory requirements and Beyond Housing's fire safety arrangements.

How will this affect me?

You will only be affected if you intentionally store or leave prohibited items in the communal areas.

Any items left or stored in communal areas will be removed. If the items are an immediate fire safety risk the items will be removed on the day they are observed.

If the items are not an immediate risk a notice to remove the items will be issued and you will have seven days to remove the items before we return to remove them.

We will store any items removed for a period of 14 days to allow you to be able to reclaim them. If you do not reclaim them the items will be disposed of. You may be charged for the removal and disposal of any items.

What if I discover items which require repair?

Our caretakers and communities advisors will identify any issues which require repair during their inspections, however, if you notice something which requires repairing then we encourage you to report the issue to our Service Centre and we will arrange for the repairs to be undertaken.

Repairs can be reported by calling **0345 065 5656** or on our website.

What if I have any fire safety concerns?

If you have any concerns regarding fire safety in your block or want to know more about what measures are in place to manage fire safety please visit our website and report your query.

Further information

If you would like to find out any additional information regarding fire safety in your home, you can visit your local area fire brigade website.

Redcar and Cleveland – www.clevelandfire.gov.uk

North Yorkshire – www.northyorksfire.gov.uk

Tyne and Wear – www.twfire.gov.uk

Durham – www.ddfire.gov.uk

Part 3



Mobility scooters

Beyond Housing understands some customers require the use of a mobility scooter to access the outdoor community in which they live.

Over the years we have seen an increase in the availability and use of mobility scooters which has increased the risks to premises which were not originally designed to accommodate such vehicles.

Mobility scooters can pose a significant fire risk. Storage and charging of mobility scooters in communal areas presents a risk of a fire which can spread to other parts of the building.

Additionally, although they might not be directly involved in a fire, mobility scooters may prevent people from evacuating the building safely or restrict access for fire fighters entering a building.

Beyond Housing has therefore established a **mobility scooter procedure** to effectively manage the ownership of mobility scooters in our buildings in order to minimise fire safety risks.

This leaflet provides guidance on the mobility scooter procedure so you are aware of how this may affect you. A full copy of the procedure will be made available upon request.

What does the mobility scooter procedure cover?

The mobility scooter procedure relates to use of class 2 and 3 mobility scooters by a person living in a flat with communal areas.

What should I do if I want to purchase a mobility scooter?

If you are considering buying a scooter you must:

- Seek advice from your community advisor who will talk to you about storage and charging arrangements
- Apply in writing to obtain permission to use and store it in one of our properties.

What happens when I apply?

Every effort will be made to accommodate all requests to have a mobility scooter and permission will not be withheld unreasonably. However, as a landlord, we have a duty of care to all people who live in and enter our premises. Therefore, before granting permission, we must carry out an assessment to ensure a safe, suitable area can be identified for storing and charging your scooter.

What does an assessment involve?

When an assessment takes place we will need to ensure:

- The scooter will be stored and charged in your property
- The storage and charging presents no risk or fire hazard to you or anyone in the building and will cause no damage to the property
- You have arrangements in place to insure (including third party liability) your scooter if you intend to use it inside one of our properties.

What happens if I buy a scooter without permission?

If you purchase a scooter and store or charge the scooter in the communal area without first gaining permission, you are in breach of your tenancy agreement and you will be requested to remove the scooter from the communal area until you apply for permission and an assessment has taken place.

What do I need to do if I already own a scooter?

If you already own a mobility scooter then you still need to apply for permission to store and charge the scooter retrospectively. We will undertake an assessment in the same way for a new scooter purchase requests, however, if the assessment concludes the scooter can only be stored in the communal area we will not request you remove the scooter but we will work with you to determine the best

course of action so the scooter does not present a risk to other customers.

What are the conditions if I am granted permission?

Permission will be subject to an owner/user signing and agreeing to the following terms and conditions:

- You must exercise care and attention at all times when using the scooter in our grounds and premises
- You must comply with any restrictions on the use of the scooter in our premises
- You must take appropriate accidental damage, theft and third party insurance cover and provide evidence of this at the time of permission being granted, and thereafter as requested
- You must maintain the scooter in accordance with the manufacturer's requirements, and only use sealed batteries
- You must charge the scooter in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions
- You accept that use and storage of the scooter in our premises or grounds is entirely at your own risk
- You understand we reserve the right to withdraw the permission for an area to be used for storage should it be required in the future for alternative use
- Permission may be withdrawn should you fail to adhere to these requirements or should any subsequent risk assessment carried out at a later date indicate the use and/or storage present an unacceptable risk, and an alternative

cannot be identified by us

- Permission may be withdrawn should any inspection undertaken by a competent authority e.g. fire and rescue inspections request the removal of such equipment from that location and an alternative location cannot be found by us
- If you cause damage to our buildings, you will be charged for any repair costs.



Your safety matters



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