

Fire safety in high-rise accommodation

There are some simple fire safety steps you can take if you live in high-rise accommodation. Living in such a flat or apartment does not necessarily make you any more at risk from fire.

Fireproof design

High-rise flats are built to be fireproof. Walls, ceilings and doors must all be designed to:

- resist fire
- stop the spread of smoke
- provide a safe means of escape

Fire safety planning

If you live in a high-rise flat or apartment, you should:

- check the fire safety arrangements for your building - these will advise you on the building's specific fire safety emergency plan if there is a fire
- make a fire escape plan and practise what you and your family would do if you had a real fire in your flat
- make sure stairways and fire escape routes are kept clear of all obstructions
- check that doors on escape routes are never locked and can open from both sides
- never tamper with internal fire mains (dry or wet riser) inlets on landings - these provide water to firefighters when there is an emergency (it could cost lives if they're not working properly when there is a fire)
- report a vandalised or damaged dry riser immediately to the management for the building and to [NI Fire and Rescue Service](#)
- never use or store bottled gas cylinders in high-rise flats
- never park or block access to high-rise flats - access roads are designed so that fire appliances can get as close as possible to fight fires

If there is a fire

If there is a fire elsewhere in the high-rise building:

- the structure of your flat is designed to give you suitable protection
- you are usually safer to stay in your flat unless the heat and smoke is affecting you
- if you stay put, you should still call 999 for advice and to make sure firefighters have been told of the fire

If there is a fire inside your flat:

- get out immediately - do not delay by trying to put the fire out yourself
- crawl along the floor where the air is clearer if there is a lot of smoke in your flat
- alert all the people in your flat and close all doors behind you as you leave
- follow your fire escape plan
- always use the stairs rather than a lift and call 999 as soon as you are in a safe place
- never assume that someone else has called 999
- if possible, alert neighbours about the fire - bang on their doors on your way out
- if it is too dangerous to follow your escape route because the hallway and stairs are filled with smoke, stay inside the safest room and call 999
- keep the door closed and pack blankets or clothes around the door to keep smoke out and hang a towel or similar item out of the window to let firefighters know where you are when they arrive