



NFCC
National Fire
Chiefs Council

The professional voice of the
UK Fire & Rescue Service

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Dear Responsible Persons,

RE: Responsibility to check your premises fire safety measures

NFCC has been monitoring fires in high rise residential buildings and the effectiveness of the arrangements in place at those premises. Recently there have been instances where the automatic ventilation systems have not operated as intended, which has affected the evacuation arrangements in place and the emergency response, most notably at the New Providence Wharf fire in London. NFCC would like to draw Responsible Persons' attention to this issue, the support guidance and information to improve the safety of residents.

NFCC is reminding all those responsible for high rise buildings of their ongoing responsibilities to check their premises' fire safety measures. This is especially vital for those in charge of properties that have implemented a temporary change to their evacuation strategy from Stay Put to Simultaneous Evacuation and/or those that have implemented temporary measures, as was the case at New Providence Wharf.

Responsible Persons are reminded that simultaneous evacuation measures need to take account of the ability of residents to self-evacuate and what assistance those who cannot do so may require.

There are resources available to you that will be of assistance. These include:

- [The NFCC draft Addendum to the Simultaneous Evacuation Guidance](#)
- [Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government's Consolidated Advice Note for Building Owners of Multi-storey, Multi-occupied Residential Buildings in January 2020](#)

Following the fire at New Providence Wharf in London on 7th May 2021, several fire safety issues with the building were identified as summarised in the preliminary fire investigation report issued by the London Fire Brigade (LFB): [New report into New Providence Wharf fire shows serious fire safety issues in building \(london-fire.gov.uk\)](#). The initial findings indicate that automatic smoke detectors in a communal corridor failed to operate both the Automatic Opening Vent (AOV, part of the premises smoke control system) and the cross-corridor fire doors.

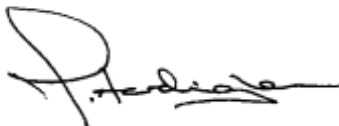
It is the responsibility of the Responsible Person to make sure that any smoke control system, which is designed to ventilate and extract smoke during a fire to help residents escape,

operates correctly. Fire safety measures, including automatic smoke detectors, should be regularly inspected, tested and maintained, and any issues acted upon. As the Responsible Person, you have a legal responsibility under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 to do so.

As the Responsible Person, you must ensure a Fire Risk Assessment for the premises is made. The Fire Risk Assessment will identify the fire safety measures needed and any resulting actions, with the significant findings of the assessment recorded. Where any premises has implemented interim measures, these should have been considered and form part of the premises' reviewed and revised Fire Risk Assessment, with any significant findings recorded and acted upon.

Advice and guidance on finding a competent fire risk assessor can be found at: [Finding fire risk assessor \(nationalfirechiefs.org.uk\)](http://nationalfirechiefs.org.uk) and advice and guidance on making a Fire Risk Assessment can be found at: [Fire safety in the workplace – Fire risk assessments \(gov.uk\)](http://gov.uk).

Yours sincerely,



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National Fire Chiefs
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Gavin Tomlinson
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pp. 

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Cllr Ian Stephens
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Dr Fiona Twycross
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Cllr Keith Aspden
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Cllr Nick Chard
Deputy-Chair

Local Government Association Fire Services Management Committee