



**DEVON &
SOMERSET**
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

Press Release

Release date 14 June 2017

Statement re: London tower block incident – Grenfell Tower

Our thoughts are with all of those affected, their families and friends and our London Emergency Service colleagues, following the tragic incident at Grenfell Tower in London. Whilst the incident is the subject of an investigation, Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service would like to remind everybody within the Devon and Somerset area of our advice in the event of a fire in high rise flats.

Housing providers have a responsibility to comply with the fire safety legislation and give advice to their tenants on the fire safety arrangements and procedures for their particular building.

The Service would like to reassure residents that we have on-going arrangements with housing providers in the Devon and Somerset area, which aim to ensure the necessary fire safety standards are provided and maintained in all such buildings.

Not all buildings will be the same; some will have a procedure where on discovery of a fire or being alerted to a fire, the residents are told to evacuate the building, others, especially high rise buildings, will have a 'stay put' policy.

'Stay Put' policy

In certain premises and circumstances where the evacuation of the residents may pose a high risk during a fire, the building's fire safety provisions may allow for residents to delay evacuation from their rooms/flats in the early stages of a fire occurrence. This is commonly known as a 'Stay Put' policy.

Types of premises where a 'Stay Put' policy may be encountered

- Sheltered accommodation
- Blocks of flats

A 'Stay Put' policy involves the following approach

- When a fire occurs within a flat, the occupants alerts others in the flat, make their way out of the building to safety and summon the fire and rescue service

- If a fire starts in the common parts, anyone in these areas makes their way out of the building to safety and summons the fire and rescue service
- All other residents not directly affected by the fire, would be expected to delay their evacuation, and remain in their flat unless directed to leave by the fire and rescue service.
- It should not be implied that those not directly involved who wish to leave the building should be prevented from doing so. Nor does this preclude those evacuating a flat that is on fire from alerting their neighbours so that they can also escape if they feel threatened.
- All corridors and escape routes need to be kept free of obstacles/storage that could prevent or hinder the safe evacuation of people leaving the building.
- An approved fire alarm system is provided throughout and is properly maintained.
- Suitable notices informing visitors, residents and the fire service that the premises is operating a 'stay put' policy, this should be displayed in a conspicuous location for all to see.

We continue to undertake a range of training exercises in high rise buildings across the two counties to ensure crews are familiar with high rise building layout, however if anyone is concerned about their safety please call 0800 05 02 999 and continue to visit our website www.dsfire.gov.uk for updated information.

Note to Editors

Responsibility for fire safety arrangements in Local Authority housing falls to Local Authorities.

The Fire and Rescue Service has an enforcement role but also remains available to provide advice and guidance to those responsible for safety of buildings and occupants.

Following the tragic fire in a high rise flats building in London today, residents of flats may have concerns about their own safety in the event of a fire in a building.

The cause of the fire is still being investigated, and it would be unwise to comment at this time.

Ends

For more press information please contact:

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