



Derbyshire  
Fire & Rescue Service  
Making Derbyshire Safer

# Fire Safety Guidance for Self-Catering Holiday Lets



## Introduction

This leaflet is intended to give those responsible for self-catering holiday lets, information and guidance to help them reduce the risk of fire and to comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 ('Fire Safety Order').

Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Service is responsible for enforcing the Fire Safety Order in these types of premises and will refer to the guidance provided in HM Government 'Do You Have Paying Guests?' booklet for small premises.

## Does fire safety law apply to me?

- Yes. Fire safety law applies to you if anyone pays to stay in your property, other than to live there as a permanent home.
- Yes. Any flat, house, cottage or caravan you rent out, to others on a short-term arrangement or for a holiday, is covered under the Fire Safety Order.
- Yes. The Fire Safety Order makes you responsible for taking steps to protect all relevant people using your premises from the risk of fire.

## Why should I do anything?

- It is a legal requirement.
- Failure to act may lead to enforcement action, prosecution, fines and/or imprisonment.
- You have a moral duty of care to ensure the safety of your guests and visitors.
- To provide business continuity and prevent the risk of damage to your business and to your reputation.

## What should I do?

- You should carry out a fire risk assessment to identify the fire safety measures which you need to have in place to keep people safe from fire.
- You should act on the outcomes of your fire risk assessment, and if necessary improve your fire safety measures.

- You should keep the risks and your fire safety measures under review.
- You should ensure equipment (e.g., fire alarm systems, gas appliances, electrical appliances, emergency lighting) is subject to annual servicing and periodic testing/inspections. A record of the testing and maintenance should be held.

## Consider vulnerable guests (young, elderly, disabled)

- You will need to think about vulnerable guests that may stay in your property when carrying out your fire risk assessment.
- Does your booking procedure take into consideration any specific needs your guests may have? How would you know if someone has a hearing impairment and how would they be alerted in the event of a fire?
- It is important that your emergency plan (what your guests do in the event of a fire) is suitable for all persons staying at your premises. It must not rely on the Fire and Rescue Service to evacuate people from your premises.
- Note: This guidance does not exclude a window escape that meets all the guidance criteria of the Building Regulations and is already in place. The premises fire risk assessment must consider the ability of the occupiers to escape via an emergency egress window. Window escape should only be considered for able-bodied individuals with no specific high risk characteristics.



## Do I need automatic fire detection (smoke alarms)?

Yes, all premises used as self-catering holiday lets require an interlinked automatic detection and fire warning system. Interlinking may be by wiring or radio signal.

- **Small Dwellings** - (Ground and first floor with only 2/3 guest bedrooms and short travel distances to a place outside). Interconnected detectors with a 10-year battery may be good enough which you may be able to fit yourself. Smoke detection should be provided in the staircase, corridors and bedrooms with a heat detector in the kitchen.
- **Medium Dwellings** - (Similar in size to a large family home ground, first and second floor with a simple route, no more than 12m travel distance, to a place outside). An interlinked mains wired with integral battery back-up system of detectors is needed. Smoke detectors should be provided in the staircase, corridors and bedrooms with a heat detector in the kitchen.
- **Large Dwellings** - In a property occupied by 10 or more persons a more comprehensive fire alarm system **may** be required.

In all size dwellings the alarms must be tested regularly and must be loud enough to wake anyone sleeping on the premises

Your guests should be given information on the system installed and what to do in the event of a false alarm

Note: A properly conducted fire risk assessment may show a variation to the standard described above due to, for example, the construction of the premises or the level of risk within other rooms (e.g. rooms which are provided with TVs, coffee making facilities and sockets which may be used for charging personal electronic devices etc).

## Do I need Fire Doors?

You must have an escape route for people to leave the premises safely.

An escape route includes any rooms, corridors and staircases that you have to go through to escape from a building. Doors leading onto the escape route should be strong enough to hold back smoke and fire for long enough to give you time to escape.

- **Small Dwellings** - A reasonably solid timber door that fits well into its frame is likely to be good enough. Any internal hollow 'egg box' door would not offer adequate protection and should be replaced.
- **Medium and Large Premises** - These types of properties may need fire doors if they are more than two storeys or where travel distances are larger than 12m. You should advise occupiers to keep all doors that open onto the escape route closed, especially at night. This is very important in the kitchen. You may need to fit suitable self-closing devices to the doors.

## Do I need to provide emergency lighting?

- If a fire knocks out the normal lighting, you should think about whether any 'borrowed lighting', for example from nearby street lamps, would be enough to allow people within the premises to find their way out.
- It may be acceptable in small premises to rely on rechargeable torches which come on automatically if the mains supply fails.
- Large premises may need more sophisticated automatic emergency lighting systems.

## What are we looking for?

When we carry out an inspection on a self-catering or holiday let we will assess the adequacy of fire safety standards by taking a risk based approach. We will consider the size, layout, construction and use of the premises.

## We will expect to see:

- A system of interlinked automatic fire detection and warning system.
- Measures to ensure people can see their way out should the mains lighting fail.
- Doors on escape routes, including bedroom doors, and final exit doors should be simple to open without the use of a key.
- In two storey buildings substantial timber doors **may** be sufficient to protect the means of escape. Three storey buildings and above with a single staircase may need a protected route from the upper floors.
- Clearly defined escape routes, kept free of storage and items which may increase the risk to those escaping.
- Self-closing solid fitting timber internal doors to protect escape routes (and to separate high fire risk rooms) where travel distances are no more than 12m. For longer travel distances, fire doors will be required to protect escape routes.
- Information to guests on what to do if they discover a fire or hear the alarm.
- Evidence of regular testing and maintenance of equipment.
- The minimum of a fire blanket in the kitchen should be provided.
- Fire exit signage may only be required for showing alternative fire exits or where the property has a complicated layout.
- Chimneys and wood burners should be serviced regularly and well maintained.

## In addition to the above, you should also consider:

- That furniture is compliant with the Furniture and Furnishing Regulations 1998.
- Carbon Monoxide detection (if hazards have been identified).
- Barbecue fire safety and carbon monoxide advice for visitors.
- For accommodation which is part of a complex/site other guidance and legislation may also apply.

## Where can I find further information?

- 'Fire Safety at Work & Other Places' plus further information can be found on the **Derbyshire Fire & Rescue** website.

<https://www.derbys-fire.gov.uk/>

- For small premises the guidance contained within the 'Do You Have Paying Guests?' booklet should be sufficient.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/do-you-have-paying-guests>

- For larger premises the fire safety provisions will need to be more comprehensive and the guidance contained in the 'Fire Safety Risk Assessment - Sleeping Accommodation' guide may be more appropriate.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fire-safety-risk-assessment-sleeping-accommodation>





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