

BRIEFING



Building Regulations - Part B (Fire Safety)

22 December 2006

The new Approved Document has now been published in two separate volumes, one for dwellinghouses and the other for buildings other than dwellinghouses (which includes flats).

Both documents (and a summary of the changes for each volume) can be found on the Planning Portal website:

<http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/england/professionals/en/4000000000084.html>

The changes are listed separately for each volume:

Volume 1 - Dwellinghouses

1. The use of sprinkler systems in accordance with BS 9251:2005 is recognised.
2. Suitable certification schemes may be accepted as evidence of compliance.
3. Reference is made to the code of practice for fire safety in adult placements.

B1

4. Smoke alarms should be installed in accordance with BS 5839- 6:2004. All smoke alarms should have a standby power supply. Where a dwellinghouse is extended smoke alarms should be provided in the circulation spaces.
5. The guidance on means of escape has been restructured and additional guidance has been provided.
6. Locks and child resistant safety stays may be provided on escape windows.
7. The alternative approach for loft conversions to two storey houses has been removed.
8. An option of providing sprinkler protection instead of alternative escape routes has been included for dwellinghouses with a floor more than 7.5m above ground level.

B3

9. The provision of a sloping floor has been included as an alternative to the 100mm step between dwellinghouses and integral garages.
10. Window and door frames are only suitable for use as cavity barriers if they are constructed of steel or timber of an appropriate thickness.

B4

11. The guidance on roof coverings incorporates the new European system of classification set out in BS EN 13501-5:2005.

B5

12. There should be access for a pump appliance to within 45m of all points within a dwellinghouse.

Appendix B

13. Other than doors between a dwellinghouse and an integral garage, fire doors need not be provided with self closing devices.

Volume 2: Buildings other than dwellinghouses

1. A new Regulation (16B) has been introduced to ensure that sufficient information is recorded to assist the eventual owner/occupier/employer to meet their statutory duties under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
2. New guidance is given on the need to ensure that management regimes are realistic.
3. Suitable certification schemes may be accepted by Building Control Bodies as evidence of compliance.
4. The use of sprinkler systems in accordance with BS 9251:2005 is recognised.

Alternative Approaches

5. HTM 05 "Firecode" should be used for the design of hospitals and similar health care premises.
6. BB100 should be used for the design of schools.

B1

7. The guidance on smoke alarms in flats has been amended such that alarms should be installed in accordance with BS 5839- 6:2004. All smoke alarms should have a standby power supply.
8. The guidance for buildings other than dwellings has been updated to take account of the 2002 edition of BS 5839-1.

Means of escape

9. Locks and child resistant safety stays may be provided on escape windows.
10. New guidance has been provided on the provision of galleries and inner inner rooms.
11. Additional options of providing sprinkler protection and/or a protected stairway instead of alternative escape routes has been included for flats with more than one storey.
12. Guidance on the use of air circulation systems in flats with protected entrance halls or stairways is given.
13. The provisions for smoke control in the common areas of flats have been changed.
14. Guidance on means of escape in buildings with open special planning has been included.
15. A method has been provided for calculating acceptable final exit widths for merging escape routes at ground floor level.
16. Guidance on the provision of cavity barriers associated with subdivided corridors has been moved to Section 3 and clarified.
17. Guidance applicable to small premises, previously in BS 5588-11, has been incorporated into the text.

18. New guidance on the design of residential care homes has been given including the use of sprinklers and/or free swing door closing devices. Greater flexibility is also given where sprinkler systems are provided.
19. Guidance on means of escape for disabled people has been incorporated in the general guidance on means of escape.
20. In tall building with phased evacuation consideration needs to be given to the interaction of firefighters with people attempting to evacuate the building.
21. More detailed guidance has been provided on the protection of ventilation systems.

B3

22. The predicted deflection of a floor, in the event of a fire, should be accommodated in the design of compartment walls.
23. Sprinkler systems should be provided in blocks of flats exceeding 30m in height.
24. A maximum compartment size has been introduced for unsprinklered single storey warehouse buildings.
25. The section on concealed spaces has been completely restructured. Table 13 (AD B 2000) has now been incorporated into the text to reduce confusion.
26. Window and door frames should only be regarded as cavity barriers if they are constructed of steel or timber of an appropriate thickness.
27. Extensive cavities in floor voids should be subdivided with cavity barriers.
28. Guidance on the specification and installation of fire dampers has been provided.
29. Non combustible materials should be used in the construction of a car park for it to be regarded as 'open sided' for the purposes of establishing the necessary period of fire resistance. Other car parks should achieve the standard period of fire resistance.

B4

30. Space separation should be considered where more than one building is on the same site but operated by different 'organisations'.
31. The guidance on roof coverings incorporates the new European system of classification set out in BS EN 13501-5:2005.

B5

32. A building with a compartment of 280m² or more, constructed more than 100m from a highway, should be provided with suitable fire hydrants.
33. There should be access for a pump appliance to within 45m of all points within a dwelling or a suitable fire main should be provided
34. Assembly buildings with a floor exceeding 900m², with a floor over 7.5m above ground level, should be provided with firefighting shafts.
35. In unsprinklered buildings every part of every storey over 18m in height should be within 45m of a fire main outlet.

Appendix B

36. Fire doors within flats need not be provided with self-closing devices.

Appendix C

37. The floor space factors table has been updated and moved to this Appendix.

38. The method of measurement for door width has been changed to align with Approved Document M.
39. Guidance is given on the measurement of free area for smoke ventilators.

New Appendix G

40. This provides guidance on the new requirement for fire safety information to be recorded and passed on to the 'responsible' person.

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