



FIRE SAFETY POLICY



Fire Safety Policy			
Last Reviewed	September 2024	Next Review	February 2026
Responsible Officer	Chief Executive		

Policy Statement: The main objective of this policy is to reduce the risk of an outbreak or spread of fire, to provide adequate means of escape and demonstrate preventative action. To maintain documentation and records in respect of fire safety management.

At Freebridge we are a responsible landlord and employer and take our responsibilities towards fire safety very seriously. We have developed policy procedures and plans to help us comply with our legal obligations to tenants, colleagues, and visitors under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 the Fire Safety Act 2021, the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022 and The Building Safety Act 2022.

This policy forms part of our wider organisational commitment to driving a health and safety culture amongst staff and contractors (as defined within our health and safety policy).

Policy Detail:

This policy is supported by our fire safety management plan detailing all aspects of the management of fire risk.

We aim to give and maintain the highest priority to the health and safety of all staff and to carry out its operations without creating an unacceptable risk to human health. We will therefore do all that is reasonable to prevent injury and to protect everyone from reasonably foreseeable work hazards, including all those who may come into contact with the organisation, as required by relevant legislation.

There have been many legislative changes relating to fire safety following the Grenfell Tower tragedy in 2017. FCH has this under continuous review and will ensure we continue to provide a full and appropriate response, including how we engage with customers on fire safety concerns. This policy will be amended accordingly as changes occur. The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 which came into force in October 2006 has been reviewed and additional legislation produced to support it. The Fire Safety Act 2021 and Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022 have now come into effect, and these are further supported by The Building Safety Act 2023.

The promotion of effective health and safety practice is the responsibility of all staff. Freebridge has the following objectives in relation to health, safety, and welfare.

We will:

- Develop arrangements to minimise the risk to human life associated with fire. These will be contained and communicated in one fire management plan
- Reduce the risk of an outbreak of fire
- Reduce the risk of the spread of fire
- Provide adequate means of escape
- Demonstrate preventive action
- Engage with tenants over fire matters and outstanding Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) actions
- Maintain documentation and records in respect of fire safety management
- Meet the legal requirements of *The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005* and all new and associated legislation that applies to fire management since Grenfell in 2017

Roles and Responsibilities

Overall accountability for Health and Safety and Fire Safety lies with the Chief Executive.

The Head of Safety acts on behalf of the CEO on all Fire Matters. Therefore, there is a dual role for both the Head of Safety and the CEO as 'The responsible person' under fire legislation and the 'Accountable person' under The Building Safety Act and the below table describes the responsibility of each Leadership Team member regarding supporting the policy aims.

These duties are laid out in our Fire Safety Management Plan and this policy, which currently is being reviewed annually due to the ongoing fire safety and building safety developments.

Role	Responsibility
CEO	The CEO under legislation and the nature of FCH business would be deemed 'The Responsible Person' in communal space. This will apply for all FCH owned and leased buildings both office and domestic. They may delegate this title, and this will be detailed in some cases in the remaining management plan. Accountable persons will be defined within the document. They will be named later as specified in legislation.

Director of Operations	To ensure that this policy is supported by budget and resources to implement and aspects that relate to their business. They will also ensure their colleagues understand this document.
Director of Service (New Homes and Commercial)	To ensure that this policy is supported by budget and resources to implement any aspects that relate to their area of business. They will also ensure their colleagues understand this document.
Director/Deputy Chief Executive (Corporate Resources)	To ensure that this policy is supported by budget and resources to implement and aspects that relate to their area of business. They will also ensure their colleagues understand this document.
Director of DLO	To ensure this policy is supported by budget and resources to implement and aspects that relate to their area of business. They will also ensure their colleagues understand this document.
Head of Safety	Is the nominated subject matter expert in fire to manage all links and operate as the main accountable person for Fire and take on delegated responsibilities of the responsible person (CEO) to allow them to discharge their duties under legislation.

The Accountable Person(s) defined below are accountable for the following:

- Being personally aware of this policy
- Being aware of the Fire Safety equipment and procedures relating to the Building Type listed; and
- Reporting any concerns to the Health and Safety Manager and monitoring until completion

Building Type	Role
Sheltered Schemes	Support Manager/Community Safety Manager
Offices	Office Manager
Community Centre	Placeshaping Manager
Domestic General Needs Properties	Operations Manager
Commercial Properties	Head of Service (New Homes)
Leasehold Properties (Commercial/Residential)	Leaseholder

Staff roles listed in the Accountable Person section must be familiar with the contents of this Policy and have had documented instructions and training on their responsibilities under the policy.

Authority to amend can only be undertaken by the Policy owner with the relevant Delegated approvals.

For information on interpretations and instructions staff should contact the Subject Matter expert or Policy owner and under no circumstances should any deviation be permitted without prior approval as above.

- Test emergency lighting
- Contacting the Fire and Rescue Service in the event of an emergency
- Assist in evacuations
- Provide essential information to the Fire and Rescue Service
- Carrying out regular inspection tours to ensure sources of ignition are separate from sources of fuel
- Feed in information regarding the effectiveness of the drills and evacuations. This will inform revisions of the local Fire Evacuation Plans and procedures
- Maintain records for ensuring compliance with testing

Documentation and Records

- This Fire Safety Policy (Corporate Intranet)
- Fire evacuation procedures (displayed where appropriate and corporate intranet)
- Copies of all risk Fire Risk Assessments (Documotive)
- Records of all fire training (Human Resources)
- A record of all fire drills
- Records of weekly tests of fire alarms, final fire exits
- Record of annual inspection and testing of all firefighting equipment
- Records of periodic tests of emergency lighting
- Records of all scheduled and unscheduled maintenance of fire detection and alarm systems
- Records of site inspections, risk assessment and maintenance of workplace and electrical equipment
- Records of any unwanted alarm activations and action taken
- Plans of the Buildings
- Records are to be held on the intranet in the location designated by the Compliance manager, hard copies can be kept as back up on site.

Duties of Employees

All employees are expected to take reasonable steps to ensure that they do not place themselves or others at risk of harm.

Co-operate fully in complying with any procedures that Freebridge may introduce as a measure to protect the safety and well-being of Tenants and Visitors.

We shall:

- Ensure employees, visitors, contractors, and tenants are provided with information relating to fire safety
- Consult with employees on all matters relating to this Fire Safety Policy and arrangements
- Ensure employees and tenants are informed of any changes that are made to our fire safety procedures and fire risk assessment
- Provide a fire safety briefing for all new employees
- Ensure information for tenants will be provided at sign up and via leaflets or Freebridge Streets Ahead
- Ensure that visitors to our operational sites understand the evacuation procedures and are not left alone unless they are aware of and familiar with, all available escape routes

We shall:

- Practise at least twice annually fire evacuation procedures.
- Provide employees with training during normal working hours, including:
 - A fire safety briefing as part of the induction process
 - Refresher training as appropriate
 - Further training would be required if there are any changes that may affect fire safety
- Always maintain all escape routes in good working order and free from obstruction and combustible materials
- Provide firefighting equipment, including:
 - Fire extinguishers
 - Fire blankets (where needed)
- Regularly service all fire equipment and ensure this is maintained by a competent person or contractor
- Provide an appropriate fire detection and alarm system where necessary. Based on the requirements of either the “Building Regulations” or the relevant risk assessment.
- Test alarm systems weekly. These tests should be carried out at the same time on the same day of the week, if this is not the case then employees and others on site will be informed that it is a routine test by some appropriate means

- Install emergency lighting for escape routes where applicable
- Ensure the risk of fire spread will be controlled by the provision of fire resisting construction and / or fire/smoke resisting doors. These provisions will be kept in good order as part of our regular maintenance schedule. All employees are required to ensure that any fire door provided remains closed.
- Display appropriate signage and notices, giving clear instructions to employees and others on what to do in the event of a fire. In addition, signage will be provided to indicate the position of fire extinguishers, fire alarm call points and, to indicate the emergency exit routes and the whereabouts of the assembly point.

Risk Assessments

These shall be done by an appointed and accredited contractor and verification of competence will be done by the Head of Safety. They shall conduct annual risk assessments on all properties that fall under the 'Regulatory Reform 'Fire Safety Order 2005' and these will identify actions that shall be completed in line with the fire management plan.

A 'five step' approach **shall be taken** as follows:

- Identify potential fire hazards in the workplace
- Decide who might be in danger, in the event of a fire, in the workplace or while trying to escape from it and note their location
- Evaluate the risks arising from the hazards and decide whether the existing fire precautions are adequate or whether more should be done to get rid of the hazard or to control the risks (e.g., by improving the fire precautions)
- Record findings and details of the action taken as a result
- Keep the assessment under review and revise when necessary

This procedure/policy is subject to constant monitoring but will, as a minimum, be formally reviewed annually or in the event of legislative change or an incident which may require significant changes to be made.