



Domestic Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm Policy

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Southern Housing (SH) places significant importance on the health, safety, and welfare of staff, residents, visitors, and others who may be affected by its business. We aim to achieve an environment compatible with the provision of quality services where health hazards are minimised so far as is reasonably practical.
- 1.2 [The Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm \(Amendment\) Regulations 2022](#) came into force on 1 October 2022.

2.0 Objectives and scope

- 2.1 The main objective of this Policy is to ensure we install domestic alarms to a minimum standard, i.e. in line with [The Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm \(Amendment\) Regulations 2022](#), which requires:
 - At least one smoke alarm is equipped on each storey of a dwelling where there is a room used as living accommodation
 - A carbon monoxide alarm is equipped in any room used as living accommodation which contains a fixed combustion appliance (excluding gas cookers)
 - Smoke and carbon monoxide (CO) alarms are repaired or replaced once we've been informed or found they are faulty.
- 2.2 The regulations apply to houses, flats, and houses in multiple occupation (HMOs).
- 2.3 The regulations apply to all social and private rented tenancies, other than those explicitly excluded in the Schedule to the Regulations, as follows:
 - Shared accommodation with a landlord or landlord's family
 - Long leases
 - Shared ownership and leasehold properties
 - Student halls of residence
 - Hotels and refuges
 - Care homes
 - Hospitals and hospices
 - Low-cost ownership homes
 - Other accommodation relating to health care provision.

- 2.3.1 Responsibility for the testing, inspection, and replacement of smoke and carbon monoxide alarms in the properties listed above will be covered under specific lease agreements, contractual arrangements, or through other legislation, i.e. The [Regulatory Reform \(Fire Safety\) Order 2005](#).
- 2.4 Carbon Monoxide alarms will not be installed within flats where heating and hot water is provided by a communal boiler, unless a fixed combustion appliance is present within the flat (other than a cooker).
- 2.5 The regulations require checks to be made by or on behalf of SH to ensure each prescribed alarm is in proper working order on the day a new tenancy begins. It is part of the Void Lettable Standard to check the alarms are in working order when signing off a property as ready for the next tenant.
- 2.6 Where possible and when appropriate, we will look to standardise the alarms we install in order to future-proof the system when extending the coverage of alarms to meet the British Standards if required.

3.0 Policy principles

- 3.1 If it's a new tenancy, we'll check alarms to make sure they are in full working order on the day the tenancy begins. We will keep a record of when the alarms were tested. A 'new tenancy' is a tenancy agreement that begins on or after 1 October 2022 and is not a renewal of a previous tenancy agreement.
- 3.2 We will instruct our contractors to follow the individual manufacturers' instructions when installing smoke alarms. However, in general, smoke alarms will be fixed to the ceiling in a circulation space, i.e. a hall or a landing.
- 3.3 We will instruct our contractors to follow the individual manufacturer's instructions when installing carbon monoxide alarms. However, in general, carbon monoxide alarms will be positioned on the ceiling, or at head height on a wall and approximately one – three metres away from a potential source of carbon monoxide.
- 3.4 Alarms with a 'sealed for life' (i.e. non-replaceable) battery will be fitted when alarms are replaced or installed from new.
- 3.5 We will replace alarms that have reached their end of life at the next periodic electrical inspection and testing visit, or when a property becomes void.
- 3.6 We'll provide guidance to our residents requesting them to test alarms monthly. Testing of smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms does not require specialist skills or knowledge and should be straightforward for SH residents to do.
- 3.7 The regulations are clear that SH as the landlord must take all reasonable steps to comply but are not expected to take legal action to gain access.
- 3.8 We will demonstrate we have taken all reasonable steps to comply by writing to our residents explaining it's a legal requirement to install alarms and it's for their own safety.

- 3.9 We will arrange a time to visit that is convenient for the resident and keep a written record of access attempts to provide to the local housing authority if required.
- 3.10 We will hold and maintain details of all smoke and CO alarm installations on a database.

4.0 Roles and responsibilities

- 4.1 **The Executive Director of Operations** oversees sign-off and agreement of all Health & Safety (H&S) policies and chairs the Health and Safety Group where new policies are agreed. Southern Housing is the duty holder.
- 4.2 **The Executive Director of Assets and Sustainability (EDAS)** retains overall accountability for this Policy and implementation, whereby the related management plan is a key instrument outlining specific processes and tasks colleagues need to follow across the business.
- 4.3 **The Director of Asset Compliance** is responsible for delivery of the key Policy objectives and for achieving the associated targets.
- 4.4 **The Director of Development** is responsible for adherence with the Building Regulations and SH's Employer Requirements.
- 4.5 **The Director of Health & Safety** will direct Southern Housing in meeting the requirements of relevant legislation. They are responsible for ensuring the Policy is reviewed and updated in line with legislation.
- 4.6 **The Head of Asset Compliance** is responsible for operational delivery.
- 4.7 Resident Services, Tenancy Sustainment, Commercial Services, Independent Living, and other staff will support efforts in gaining access to carry out works and inspections.

5.0 Enforcement

- 5.1 The requirements are enforced by local housing authorities who can impose a fine of up to £5,000 where a landlord fails to comply with a remedial notice.
- 5.2 The local housing authority can only issue a remedial notice if they have reasonable grounds to believe a landlord is in breach of their duties under regulation 4.

6.0 Standards

- 6.1 [The Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm \(Amendment\) Regulations 2022.](#)
- 6.2 The regulations do not state alarms need to be hardwired; however, smoke alarms should comply with British Standard BS 5839-6 and carbon monoxide alarms should comply with British Standard BS 50291.

7.0 Resident communication

- 7.1 We will provide information on the importance of testing and reporting faulty alarms via our company website.
- 7.2 Where existing alarms have replaceable batteries, residents are advised to replace the batteries themselves. If the alarm still doesn't work, or if they are unable to replace the batteries, they are advised to report this to SH.

8.0 Performance reporting

- 8.1 We'll report month-end performance on the status of installed smoke and carbon monoxide alarms to the Executive Team monthly, Board quarterly, and PASHSG bi-monthly.

Smoke alarms

- % dwellings with domestic smoke alarm installed and tested
- No. of dwelling where smoke alarm installation yet to be confirmed
- No. of dwellings requiring smoke alarm installation.

Carbon monoxide alarms

- % dwellings with CO alarm installed and tested
- No. of dwelling where CO alarm installation yet to be confirmed
- No. of dwellings requiring CO alarm installation.

9.0 What we've done to ensure this Policy is fair

- 9.1 We consider the needs of all occupants. Works are designed to ensure people are not treated differently or discriminated against because of their characteristics.
- 9.2 We've carried out an Equality Impact Assessment to consider the positive and negative impacts this Policy may have on people with protected characteristics under the [Equality Act 2010](#).
- 9.3 We will consider residents individual circumstances when choosing the most suitable alarms. For example, if residents are deaf or hard of hearing, alarms which alert by vibration or flashing lights (instead of sound) would be more suitable.
- 9.4 We recognise some residents may need adjustments due to a language barrier, disability, cultural need, or vulnerability. In these circumstances, in line with our [Reasonable Adjustments & Vulnerable Needs Policy](#), we'll work with residents to ensure we consider their specific needs, on a case-by-case basis, provided it doesn't compromise health and safety to individuals or homes. This includes working in partnership with other agencies to ensure we manage and mitigate any known risks of safety and wellbeing.
- 9.5 We aspire to embed diversity and inclusion within the culture of our business activities.

10.0 Review

- 10.1 We will review this Policy to address legislative, regulatory, best practice or operational issues.

Controls

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