



West Yorkshire
Fire & Rescue Service

Smoke and Heat Detection Policy

PRE-POL-004



Contents

1	Introduction.....	3
2	What is our offer?	3
3	Smoke detection for tenanted properties	5
4	Accessibility	5
5	Partnerships.....	6
6	Data and information sharing.....	6
7	Equality and Diversity	6

1 Introduction

The latest figures reported in the English Housing survey show that 95% of households, in England, reported having a smoke detector¹. Only 90% reported having a working smoke detector which is an increase from 2008-9 when 84% reported having one.

Despite this, a significant number of accidental dwelling fires still occur every year. In 2016-17, 332,000 households in England², had experienced a fire in the previous two years; 75% of these were extinguished by a household member or the fire went out by itself and 25% were attended by fire and rescue services.

912,000 properties, predominantly in the private-rented and owner-occupied sectors, were assessed by surveyors as having a significantly higher than average risk of fire; the installation of smoke alarms was identified as a necessary mitigating action in 45% of these properties.

Home Office data³ for September 2019 indicates there had been a 9% increase in the number of fire fatalities in domestic dwellings from the previous 12 months and nearly 3,100 people received hospital treatment following dwelling fires.

In addition to some properties not having any working detectors, our own data and information confirms that a number of fire incidents also occur in properties where smoke detectors are fitted and working. In some cases, the detection fitted:

- Was not in the room where the fire risk arose or had been identified, or
- Was not suitable for the occupier's needs.

2 What is our offer?

WYFRS is committed to making West Yorkshire Safer. We believe we can significantly reduce the number of fire fatalities, injuries and property damage from fire by:

- Using our expertise to identify risk within households,
- Continuing to fit smoke detection,

¹ English Housing Survey: Fire and fire safety, 2016-17. Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

² English Housing Survey: Fire and fire safety, 2016-17. Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

³ Fire and Rescue Incident Statistics; Year ending September 2019; Home Office, published 13/2/2020

- Introducing the fitting of heat detection,
- Fitting specialist equipment in some properties where a person may be of greater risk. i.e., the hearing impaired.

We deliver the above services through our Safe and Well programme. Any detection we install will be appropriate to the layout, fire risks and hazards within the home and the health and circumstances of the occupants. We will fit detection in households where there is no detection present and where we have identified there is a risk of fire.

As a minimum for those at medium, high risk or very high risk of fire, we will provide and install a:

- Smoke detector to each occupied level within a property - in the hallway and on landings.
- Smoke detector in every room which is regularly inhabited i.e., bedrooms, living rooms, dining rooms based upon **the fire risk of the occupant's lifestyle or behaviour.**
- Heat detector in the kitchen.
- Heat detector in other spaces such as an attic room, utility room or attached garage where a fire risk has been identified.

Where necessary, due to the level of risk in a property, detectors will be **inter-linked** to enable actuation irrespective of the fire's location.

WYFRS will only fit smoke and heat detectors as part of a full Safe and Well visit. If it is not possible to carry out a full Safe and Well assessment at the time of fitting i.e. where an incident has taken place during the night or a crew have been called away during a visit, a full Safe and Well visit will be carried out at the earliest opportunity so that the risk can be fully identified and mitigated.

Any smoke or heat detectors we do fit are 'gifted' to the occupier who signs to agree that they will test, maintain and replace the detectors appropriately.

We do not currently supply or fit carbon monoxide detectors but will give safety advice to householders where we identify a risk.

WYFRS does not provide smoke detection to sheltered housing schemes, residential care homes, children's homes, hospices, specialised housing providers or the communal areas in HMOs (Houses in Multiple Occupation). Detection in these buildings and homes are the responsibility of the housing provider, landlord, local authority or owner. We can recommend the installation of further interventions (including detection) but these should be carried out by the housing provider, landlord or owner. Further advice and support may be offered to the housing provider, landlord, local authority or owner if the resident is endangering their own

life or that of others. This advice may be given via a bespoke visit and should be additional to basic fire safety advice already given.

3 Smoke detection for tenanted properties

Private sector landlords are required under the Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm regulations 2015, to have at least one smoke alarm installed on every storey of their property and a carbon monoxide alarm in any room containing a solid fuel burning appliance such as a coal fire or wood burning stove. They must ensure the detectors are in working order at the start of each new tenancy.

It is also the landlord's responsibility to provide mains-operated smoke detectors in properties which have been built since June 1992. Landlords will find guidance on their responsibilities in the LACoRS document; Housing– Fire Safety⁴.

Landlords of houses in multiple occupation (HMO) have a legal duty to assess the fire risk within the property and take adequate measures to mitigate that risk. See our external web page for further information [here](#).

When social housing providers build new homes, they must comply with building regulations and include mains-supply smoke detection on each floor of individual properties. There is no similar legal regulation which currently requires them to fit smoke detection within individual properties. However, the majority of social landlords do have programmes in place which ensure that some form of smoke detection is provided and maintained on a regular basis.

WYFRS do not provide and install detection for tenanted properties. We may however, fit detectors as a temporary safety measure particularly if the occupier's lifestyle has been identified as being at high risk of fire, Tenants will be encouraged to contact their landlord so that a full risk assessment may be carried out and appropriate detection subsequently fitted. In some instances, we may pass concerns on to the relevant local authority's housing standards team.

4 Accessibility

We promote our Safe and Well programme and deliver fire safety advice about detection through traditional media such as radio, television and the press, social media, our website, our partners and via our presence within local communities.

⁴ Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services. August 2008
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People who are concerned about their fire safety can contact us via a variety of different methods i.e., web, email, mail, telephone and face-to-face.

People who are at a low risk of fire within their home have the option of completing an online education package in which they will receive relevant fire safety information for their situation. This package is available in a variety of different formats.

5 Partnerships

We develop and maintain successful partnerships and referral pathways across the five districts of West Yorkshire. Where appropriate, we may work together with other stakeholders to deliver advice about fire safety and maintaining detectors to tenants or install temporary detection.

6 Data and information sharing

We will use compliant information-sharing protocols and agreements to share appropriate data and personal information with our partners and other relevant organisations.

7 Equality and Diversity

We will work with our partners to ensure that our Safe and Well service is accessible to all individuals within our local communities, particularly those at most risk of fire. We will engage with diverse groups and communities in West Yorkshire, to ensure that we remain flexible in our approach and continue to meet changing needs by providing relevant advice and appropriate detection.

Change Record

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25/01/2021	D Mahon	1.0	Sentence removed
25/05/2022	C.Tabert	6.0	Link updated
14/03/2023	D Mahon	7.0	Checked for accessibility