



FIRE SAFETY GUIDANCE

Following several enquiries about fire safety guidance for residential we've pulled together the following information on what the requirement is from leaders and Girlguiding venue managers when organising or hosting a sleepover or residential event.

We recognise that in the past leaders have been asked to check the fire risk assessment document but due to not having the relevant experience and training understanding this is difficult. The responsibility for fire safety lies with the venue and therefore we've amended this guidance so that leaders have a paper trail of asking that it has been done but they do not need to see the document itself.

Below we have outlined the key information and signposted to the Girlguiding website where you can find more detail. We'll be circulating this information to country and region outdoor activity advisers and residential advisers for their information also.

FOR LEADERS USING VENUES FOR RESIDENTIALS.

The venue must be approved by the relevant host adviser. If the venue has not already been approved, notify the adviser in plenty of time for the venue to be inspected before you make firm plans.

The law says that the overall risk must be adequately managed.

Girlguiding UK stipulates that for a residential event the property must have an automatic fire detection system (smoke or heat alarms) in every room - this is a smoke or heat alarm that picks up the changes in the environment and automatically goes off as opposed to a manual alarm that is activated by an individual. Whether this needs to be hard-wired or battery operated will depend on the fire risk assessment.

Leaders **must**:

- Check the property management have undertaken an appropriate fire risk assessment any issues identified have been addressed and the property complies with all relevant legislation – *an email from the venue confirming this is sufficient*

- Check the property has an automatic fire detection system and the alarm if raised can be heard throughout the building. The alarm must be regularly serviced and tested – *an email from the venue confirming this is sufficient*
- Inform the venue of any specific needs of the group in particular with regard to anyone who needs a personal emergency evacuation plan (PEEP)
- Have a briefing from the venue on the emergency evacuation procedure – and relay this to everyone at the event
- Know where the fire assembly point is and inform everyone at the event

The above is the Girlguiding UK minimum requirement for leaders.

FOR GIRLGUIDING-OWNED SMALL PROPERTY MANAGERS

By small property we mean one made up of maybe a main hall with a couple of meeting rooms off it, a small office and kitchen, a couple of toilets and some parking outside.

For the majority of these venues the Fire Safety Act 2021 and associated guidance has not changed, the recent changes have been for multi-residential properties with tenants – so high-rise flats for example. If your Girlguiding venue previously met UK fire regulations it is highly likely that it still meets these regulations.

The law says that the overall risk must be adequately managed. Girlguiding UK gives the following guidance:

Key information:

- Properties being used for residentials need to have an automatic fire detection system– this is a smoke or heat alarm that picks up the changes in the environment and automatically goes off as opposed to a manual alarm that is activated by an individual. And should meet the L2 standard
- For large more complex properties including those with more than one storey, we would recommend an L1 system, with detectors in voids, cupboards etc. so people get the earliest possible warning of a fire and where if one alarm goes off, they all go off. These should be regularly serviced and tested. If an L1 system isn't used, mitigations for this should be included in the fire risk assessment.
- Fire risk assessments need to be completed by a competent person and reviewed annually. If you make changes to the equipment or property you will also need to review the fire risk assessment. If you aren't competent to complete a fire risk assessment, then you should employ a competent fire risk assessor who is suitably qualified – you must be using people qualified to a min level 3/4 Dip Fire safety or someone from [Fire Risk Assessors \(FRA\) Register \(ife.org.uk\)](https://www.ife.org.uk). Don't forget to get at least three quotes.
- Fire extinguishers are a legal requirement, and you will need someone with the right training (local fire protection company) to install these and make

sure they are working on site. They will also be able to advise on what type, how many and where they should go and they can train you on how to use them.

- Fire alarms must be checked regularly and exit routes must be always kept clear.

Further information can be found on the Girlguiding website here:

[Health & safety for hired spaces](#)

[Fire safety](#)

[Small property health & safety guidance](#)

[PASS – can we put the diagram on the website somewhere as a PDF?](#)

If you do have enquiries around fire safety at residential that you are unsure of please do get in touch: volunteersupport@girlguiding.org.uk