

**Tenant and Leaseholder Services**

[thanet.gov.uk/myhome](https://thanet.gov.uk/myhome)



# **Your Building Safety Guide Harbour Towers**

First Edition - February 2024

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## **Building and home safety**

We want you to feel safe in your home. Providing a safe home is our priority.

We have responsibilities as your landlord. You also play a part in keeping your home safe.

We have created this guide to give you safety information about the building you live in. Find out who to contact for more safety information or if you want to report an issue with your building.

We use your feedback to improve the way we do things and the information we provide you.

Sally O’Sullivan  
Head of Tenant and Leaseholder Services

## Your building evacuation procedure

The evacuation procedure for your building is called '**simultaneous evacuation**'. This means if you hear the fire alarm you **must leave the building, using the stairs, not the lift**. Wait outside, on the pavement area at the corner of Liverpool Lawn, until the Fire Service tells you it is safe to go back inside.

This has been agreed with the Kent Fire and Rescue Service. It is due to the fact that the External Wall Insulation (EWI) is considered combustible when exposed to a flame.

The EWI is unsuitable for buildings over 11 metres. We are replacing it as part of our Refurbishment and Retrofit Programme.

We test the communal fire alarm every Friday. If the alarm continues to sound you must evacuate the building.

## Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP)

We have a list of the people in your building who might need help to evacuate in an emergency. This could be because they have mobility issues or health needs. These people have a PEEP which tells the Fire Service who needs help if there is a fire.

Please contact us if you have a PEEP and anything has changed, or if you think you should have one. Call us on 01843 577262 or email [myhome@thanet.gov.uk](mailto:myhome@thanet.gov.uk)

# Fire safety information about your flat

Your flat in **Harbour Towers** has fire alarm equipment fitted.  
(Please note the images used may not be exactly the same as the equipment in your flat).

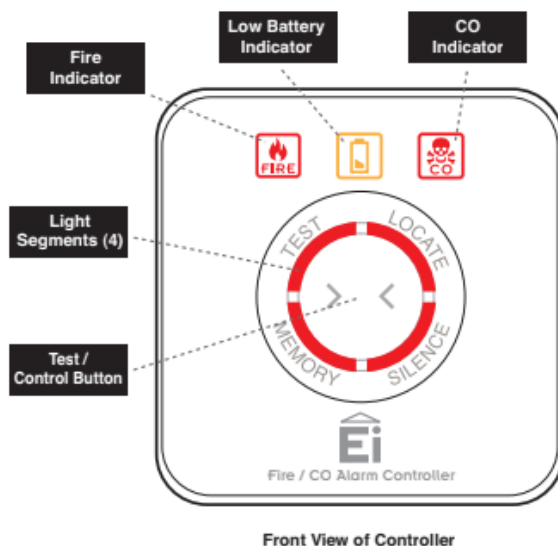
Your lounge and hallway has a **mains powered optical smoke alarm**. The alarm is set off when smoke enters the detector.



Your kitchen has a **mains powered heat alarm**. We fit heat alarms in kitchens instead of a smoke alarm which are more likely to set off false alarms.



Your hallway has a **test/silence button**. You should use the button to test your smoke and heat alarms every month. To check your alarm is working, press the test button which will trigger a test alarm sound. Use the silence button to mute the alarm in case of a false alarm or to reduce noise.



## Mitigation alarm system

The mitigation alarm system connects to the communal alarm system. If a fire starts in a flat, the flat alarm and communal alarm will sound to alert everyone to evacuate the building.

Your hallway should have a red **mitigation alarm sounder** and every room that has a window should have a **heat detector**.



**Mitigation heat detectors** detect changes in temperature. When the temperature in a room rises rapidly or reaches a certain temperature, the heat detector triggers an alarm.



We can only connect the mitigation alarm system to the communal alarm system when all flats in your building have the sounder and heat detectors fitted. This is not currently possible in your building as not all residents have allowed us access.

**If your flat does not have these please contact us as soon as possible by calling 01843 577262.**

## Looking after your fire alarm system



### Do

- ✓ Report any fire alarm faults to Mears.
- ✓ Report alarm beeping to Mears as this indicates the back up battery may be low.
- ✓ Press the button on your smoke alarm and heat alarm to test them monthly.

### Don't

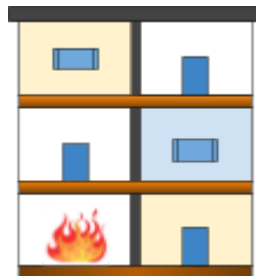
- ✗ Remove, tamper with or disconnect fire alarm equipment.
- ✗ Paint over fire alarm equipment.
- ✗ Cover any fire alarm equipment.

# Compartmentation

**All the flats are ‘compartmented’.** This means that the walls and front entry door will resist smoke and fire for at least 30 minutes. If you can’t evacuate, you can stay in your flat safely until the Fire Service arrives.

**Compartmentation** prevents fire, heat and smoke from spreading.

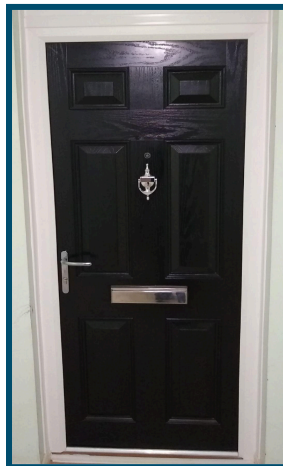
- 30 minutes of fire resistance.
- Maintains building structure.
- Allows time to evacuate the building.
- Minimises destruction.
- Helps firefighting.



**Your front door** is a very important part of ensuring you remain safe if there is a fire.

You must not tamper with the closures or fixtures. If you do, your door will not keep you as safe in your home if there is a fire.

(Please note the image used may not be exactly the same as your flat door).



# Information about your building



**Harbour Towers** has nine floors which are connected by one central staircase. There are two lifts which stop at alternate floors (odds and evens).

The doors and walls in the communal area protect the staircase from the spread of smoke and fire for 60 minutes. If there is a fire it is safe for you to use the staircase to evacuate. Communal doors must be kept closed to stop smoke and fire spreading.

**Emergency lighting** will come on in communal areas, so that you can see if the power goes out.

Communal landings and stairs must be kept clear of rubbish and belongings. This means that everyone has a safe escape route with no trip hazards. It also means that the Fire Services can reach people who need to be rescued or helped to evacuate.

**CCTV** covers the communal areas inside the building as well as the outside areas. We use CCTV to investigate anti-social behaviour which may reduce the safety of your building.

Each communal landing has **automatic window vents (AOV)** which open automatically if they detect smoke. The vents help remove smoke from the communal area, clearing the escape route.

The fire service can control which AOVs open and close, if they need to.

Communal areas are fitted with **smoke detectors** which are linked to the **communal fire alarm system**.

When the alarm sounds the emergency services are alerted.

There is a **central bin chute** in the building. The bin chute room has a door that will prevent smoke and fire from entering the building for at least 60 minutes. You must make sure this door is always closed.

**The bin chute has a hopper door** that will stop smoke or fire in the bin chute from entering the building. You must not remove the hopper door and always close it after throwing away your rubbish.

Rubbish is collected in bins in the bin store on the ground floor. There is a **cut off plate** at the bottom of the chute that stops smoke or fire coming into the building if a fire starts in the bin store. The bin store is also fitted with **sprinklers**.

A **dry riser** is a pipe that runs through your building. The Fire Service uses the dry riser to draw water for their equipment.

**Fire Risk Assessments** are carried out every year by an independent Fire Risk assessor. They check for fire hazards in the building. They give the building a fire risk rating and tell us how we can remove hazards or improve the safety rating.

Your building's current fire risk rating is '**moderate**'.

This means, fire safety improvements are needed to reduce the risk. A plan is in place to carry out the improvements within a specific timeframe.



## **Who is responsible for safety in your building?**

We all have a part to play in making sure that everyone is safe in **Harbour Towers.**

### **As your landlord we will ensure that:**

- your building and home are safe for you to live in and meet regulations, with a smoke alarm in every home
- fire doors are properly maintained and meet legal requirements
- exit routes are well lit at all times
- everyone who works in your block is competent to do so. We have systems and processes in place for this
- we work in partnership with other organisations such as the Fire Service, to keep your building safe

### **It is your responsibility to:**

- be careful in your own flat around safety, keeping any escape routes clear
- let us know if your circumstances change and you need help to evacuate in an emergency
- check your smoke detectors are working once a month
- keep the area outside your flat clear of belongings or rubbish
- keep communal areas clear
- use the bin chutes to dispose of rubbish safely
- throw away large items responsibly. Speak to your Housing Response Officers if you need advice
- keep the bin chutes clear. Do not block them with items including cardboard, toys or mattresses
- keep fire doors closed at all times
- let us or our contractors into your home to carry out necessary safety checks
- report any issues to us, particularly around fire safety

**“Together we can keep you, your home and building safe”**

## The teams who play a role in building safety

### Building Safety and Compliance Manager

The Building Safety and Compliance Manager makes sure that you remain safe when work is carried out in your building. They are the person to speak to, for anything related to your building.

#### Compliance Team

The Compliance Team carries out servicing and safety testing of key services within your building. This includes the lifts, electrics, fire safety equipment, hot water and other systems.

#### Planned Maintenance Team

Our Planned Maintenance Team carries out works including kitchen and bathroom replacements, lift upgrades, rewiring and installing sprinklers and fire doors.

#### Repairs Team

The Repairs Team is committed to maintaining your home to a good condition. When you report repairs, they arrange for them to be carried out by the right tradesperson.

#### Housing Management

The Housing Management Team manages issues to do with tenancy and estate management. This includes anti-social behaviour, allocations and mutual exchanges.

#### Housing Response Officers (HROs)

The HROs check that communal areas are clear and clean, bin chutes are not blocked, fire safety signs are in place, identify fire hazards and report any communal repairs that are needed.

#### Waking Watch Team

The Waking Watch team patrols the building 24 hours a day. They report any hazards that they find. They will tell you if there is a fire in your building.

**“Together we can keep you, your home and building safe”**

## Building safety and compliance

Landlords have new responsibilities to improve the structural safety and fire safety of high-rise buildings. This is because of the Building Safety Act 2022.

Thanet District Council is the 'Accountable Person' for building safety.

We have a Building Safety and Compliance Manager. Their job is to oversee and manage building safety as set out in the new act.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is the regulator for building safety. Each year we provide the HSE with information about your building's safety.

If the HSE is happy with what we are doing, they will issue a Building Assessment Certificate. We will display the certificate on your communal notice board to show you that your building meets the regulations.

If you have any questions or concerns about fire safety, or if you'd like more information about your building, you can:

- visit our website [thanet.gov.uk/highriseliving](https://thanet.gov.uk/highriseliving)
- contact the Building Safety and Compliance Manager by
  - emailing: [buildingsafety@thanet.gov.uk](mailto:buildingsafety@thanet.gov.uk)
  - calling: 01843 577 262

## **Building safety checks we carry out**

We carry out regular inspections, testing and servicing in your building. We do not need access to your home to carry out these safety checks.

These include:

- Communal fire alarm - test weekly and service quarterly.
- Lifts - service monthly and inspect every six months.
- External wall insulation (EWI) - inspect monthly.
- Automatic Opening Vents (AOVs) - annual service and test monthly.
- Dry risers - service every six months and inspect monthly.
- Communal electrics - test every five years.
- Bin Store sprinklers - service every six months and inspect monthly.
- Legionella - test monthly, quarterly and annual inspection.
- Bin chute - annual service.
- Lightning protection - annual service.
- Roof fans - annual service.

## **Working together to keep your building safe**

We will visit you to discuss fire safety in your home and answer questions about your building.

We will ask if you feel safe in your home and how you feel about living in your block, during these home visits.

We work closely with Kent Fire and Rescue Service to improve safety and reduce incidents in your block.

We need you to let us into your home to carry out necessary safety inspections.

- We will inspect the front door of your flat every year and inspect the communal fire doors every three months to ensure they close properly and do not need any repairs.
- We will inspect the electrics within your flat every five years. This is called an Electrical Inspection Condition Report (EICR).

We engage residents to help us produce building safety information such as this one. We share information and updates on the improvements we are making with you.

We will let you know the results of any consultations and tell you how your feedback has made a difference.

We will tell you if any building information changes. If you make an enquiry about building safety, we will get back to you within ten working days.

# Getting involved in building safety

If you want to get involved in the safety of your building, you can:

- complete a survey - online, postal or face to face
- take part in an inspection of your block
- come to an event
- ask us a question about building safety
- submit a complaint or compliment
- join the High-rise Living Group

## Keeping you informed

We will keep you up to date through:

- building safety guides such as this one
- regular newsletter or leaflet drops directly to your door
- communal noticeboards
- local events
- information on our website [thanet.gov.uk/highriseliving](https://thanet.gov.uk/highriseliving)

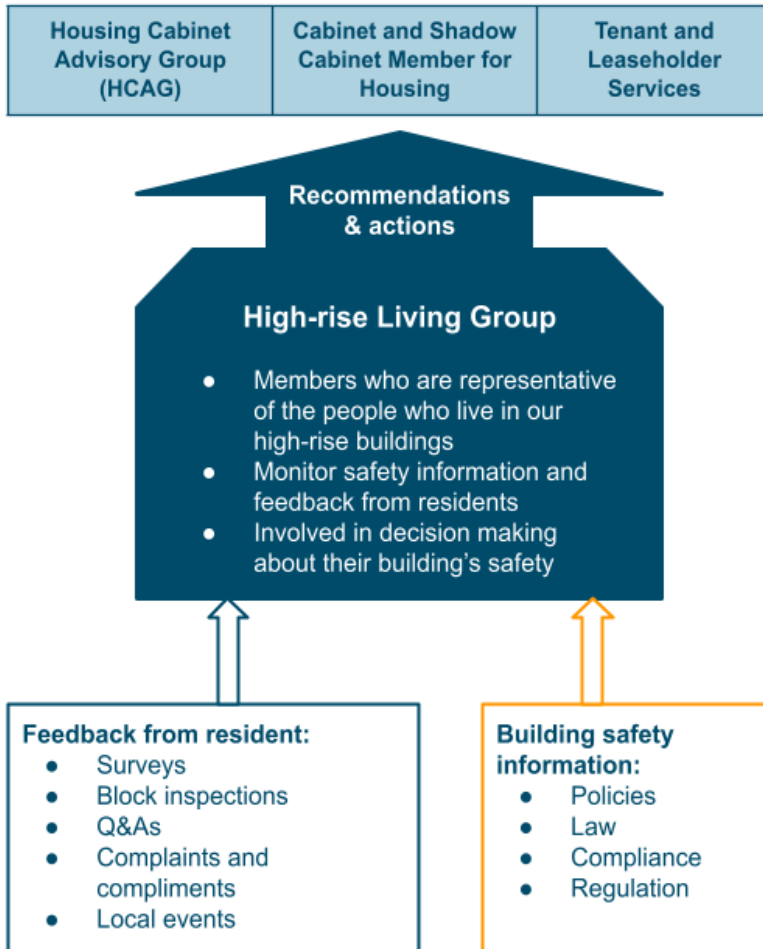
## Training and support

If you feel you need more confidence and skills to get involved in building safety activities, we can help.

Members of the High-rise Living Group can get specialist training. We can also lend you equipment such as a tablet so that you can read documents and attend online meetings.

If you'd like more information, contact the Resident Involvement Team by calling **01843 577090** or email [residentinvolvement@thanet.gov.uk](mailto:residentinvolvement@thanet.gov.uk)

# What happens to the feedback residents give us?



The following resident feedback feed into Thanet District Council decision making process:

- **Housing Cabinet Advisory Group (HCAG).**
- **Cabinet and Shadow Cabinet Member for Housing.**
- **Tenant and Leaseholder Services.**
  - **High-rise Living Group:**
    - Members who are representative of the people who live in high-rise buildings.
    - Monitor safety information and feedback from residents.
    - Involved in decision making about their building's safety.
  - **Feedback from residents:**
    - Surveys.
    - Block inspections.
    - Questions and answers.
    - Complaints and compliments.
    - Local events.
  - **Building safety Information:**
    - Policies.
    - Law.
    - Compliance.
    - Regulation.

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Tenant and Leaseholder Services - Contact Information