



The New Fire Safety Bill to go through Parliament from March 2020



While BDS and the rest of the fire safety industry focuses its attention on business continuity in the face of COVID-19, work is still going on to improve fire safety in buildings in England and Wales.

In March, the Fire Safety Bill began its passage through Parliament, amending the Fire Safety Order 2005: it was introduced to the House of Commons and given its First Reading on Thursday 19 March. The proposed legislation makes it clear that the responsible person or duty-holder for multi-occupied, residential buildings must manage and reduce the risk of fire for the structure and external walls of the building, including cladding, balconies and windows and the entrance doors to individual flats that open into common parts.

The aim is to empower fire and rescue services to take enforcement action and hold building owners to account if they don't comply with the new rules.



The Bill takes forward recommendations that came out of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry phase one report. It stated that building owners and managers of high-rise and multi-occupied residential buildings should be responsible for:

1. Regular inspections of lifts and the reporting of results to the local fire and rescue services.
2. Ensuring evacuation plans are reviewed and regularly updated and personal evacuation plans are in place for residents whose ability to evacuate may be compromised.
3. Ensuring fire safety instructions are provided to residents in a form that they can reasonably be expected to understand.
4. Ensuring individual flat entrance doors, where the external walls of the building have unsafe cladding, comply with current standards.

The Bill will also give the Government the ability to amend the list of qualifying premises that fall within the scope of the Fire Safety Order by way of secondary legislation.

The idea is to enable the Government to respond quickly to new developments in the design and construction of buildings.

Click here to track the Bill's progress through Parliament.

The team at **BDS**