
HMO GUIDE · FIRE SAFETY

Fire Safety in HMOs — A Practical Guide

FRAs, alarms, fire doors & escape routes for HMO operators

Refreshed for BS 9792:2025 — the new housing FRA code of practice. Covers the Fire Safety Order 2005, Fire Safety Act 2021, Fire Safety (England) Regs 2022, detection grades, FD30 doors, escape routes and the records councils ask to see.

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What's new: BS 9792:2025 — Fire risk assessment, Housing — Code of practice — published 1 August 2025 by BSI, supersedes the 2008 LACoRS document as the technical benchmark for housing FRAs. Underlying law

(Fire Safety Order 2005, Fire Safety Act 2021, Fire Safety (England) Regs 2022) is unchanged.

The legal framework

- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 — duty on the 'responsible person' (landlord or managing agent) to carry out and keep under review a suitable and sufficient FRA.
- Fire Safety Act 2021 — confirms FSO applies to the structure, external walls and flat entrance doors of buildings with two or more domestic premises.
- Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022 — additional duties in multi-occupied residential buildings (information to residents, wayfinding signage, etc.).
- BS 9792:2025 — the current code of practice that competent FRA assessors should be following.

Detection — LACoRS grades (still widely referenced)

Grade Typical HMO use

LD1 Highest risk HMOs — detection in every room (excluding bathrooms), escape routes and principal habitable rooms.

LD2 Medium risk — detection in escape routes and rooms presenting a high fire risk (e.g. kitchen, lounge).

LD3 Lower risk — detection in escape routes only.

BS 9792:2025 now provides the up-to-date code of practice; cross-check assessor reports against it. Many councils still cite LACoRS — both can coexist provided the outcome meets BS 9792:2025.

Fire doors

- FD30 (30-minute resistance) on rooms opening onto escape routes and on flat entrance doors where required.
- Intumescent seals + cold smoke seals; self-closing devices in working order.
- Quarterly checks of communal fire doors and annual checks of flat entrance doors (Reg 10, FS(E) Regs 2022).

Escape routes & emergency lighting

- Protected route from each storey to a place of ultimate safety; no storage, no unprotected glazing.
- Emergency lighting where the route is not naturally lit — monthly function test, annual full-duration test, recorded.
- Final exit doors openable from the inside without a key.

Records the council will ask for

- Current FRA (review at least annually or when circumstances change).
- Alarm test log (weekly), emergency lighting log, fire door inspection log.
- Servicing certificates for detection and emergency lighting systems.

- Resident fire safety information pack (FS(E) Regs 2022 duty).

Sources

BSI: BS 9792:2025 (1 August 2025). legislation.gov.uk: RRFSO 2005; Fire Safety Act 2021; Fire Safety (England) Regs 2022. gov.uk: Fire safety in purpose-built blocks of flats; Home Office how-to guide (2023).

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