



FIRE CHECKS AT CHANGEOVER– OWNERS RESPONSIBILITIES

Ensuring that a Furnished Holiday Let (FHL) is safe in terms of fire risk is the responsibility of owners and falls into two main areas:

1. A written Fire Risk Assessment – identification of hazards, carrying out necessary works, reviewing annual.
2. On-going inspection to ensure that a hazard has not developed during each letting.

This briefing note deals with the second area of responsibility.

BACKGROUND

Owners of FHL's are ultimately the responsible persons for fire safety in their properties. They cannot pass this over to anyone else without proper instruction and training, written agreements and procedures being in place. Even if they do the buck still stops with the owner. Therefore, owners have to use due diligence to ensure that the person charged with the day to day responsibilities are carrying these out.

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE AT EACH CHANGEOVER?

1. Test smoke alarms to ensure that they are still working as designed.

All smoke alarms should be linked so this should be a matter of pressing one and making sure all others also sound. Lots of questions about linked fire alarms and whether they are necessary. By law, you have to have a risk assessment. It's not possible in a building with more than one room to properly risk assess if the alarms are not linked. If a fire starts in the kitchen, then the alarms in the bedrooms need to sound. It may be possible to retrofit or use a Bluetooth alarm system.

2. Check the pressure dial on all extinguishers to ensure that this has not dropped below the threshold level.

The dial is on the outside of the extinguisher, clearly visible.

3. Examine the condition of wires on all household appliances to ensure that there is not excessive wear and tear, breakages in the protective cable etc. Remove any that are found to be in this condition.
4. Remove any electrical items which no longer work.
5. Ensure that all rubbish is removed from the property and the area immediately adjacent to it. Most fires external to properties start in accumulated rubbish.
6. Ensure that no ignition sources are left in the property – matches, lighters etc. If you provide matches for log burners, make sure that they are kept out of reach of children.
7. Check Carbon Monoxide monitors if applicable.

TRAINING

New staff should be shown how to carry out the above which can easily and quickly be incorporated into part of a regular cleaning regime. All staff should receive annual refresher training and records kept to show that this has been done.

CHECKLISTS AND RECORD KEEPING

As every property is different each owner needs to draw up a property specific check list covering the items in 1 – 6 above. See example given below. The checklist should be signed by the person carrying out the checks. Owners should regularly inspect these, and some owners ask for them to be emailed over at each changeover so that records can be properly kept.

THIS SOUNDS LIKE LOTS OF EXTRA WORK

It should not be when it is incorporated as part of the general cleaning and tidying regime. For example, when cleaning in the kitchen the kettle, microwave etc are all wiped down and an easy visual inspection is carried out then, probably without even realising it!

WHY?

Responsibilities for fire safety do not stop at the production of an FRA (Fire Risk Assessment). They are an on-going responsibility of the property owner. If for example there is no written record of smoke alarms being tested after each letting and there is a fire, there is no proof that the smoke alarms were working, and the owner has not shown due diligence. It is unlikely that an insurance company would cover the damage in these circumstances and any loss of life would ultimately be the fault of the owner.

AS AN OWNER...

1. Draw up the checklists for fire safety for your property.
2. Make it clear to your cleaning team that this has to be done at each and every changeover.
3. Ensure that staff know how to do this and how to easily incorporate it into their cleaning regime.
4. Provide a fire safety folder where previous signed checklists are kept and where notes are made of any items in disrepair or removed are made.
5. Keep these records for at least a year
6. Ensure that any reports from staff of unsafe electrical equipment are dealt with before the letting commences.

Example of a check list; This can be downloaded separately and the modified to suit from the PASC UK Website at <https://bit.ly/3yiW2GX>

Business Name	
Property Name	
Date	
Owner or cleaner responsible	

	Yes	No	N/A	Comments
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Smoke alarm tested				
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Fire extinguishers pressure checked				
Extinguisher 1				
Extinguisher 2				
Extinguisher 3				
Etc as necessary				

Fire Blanket Checked				
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All ignition sources removed*				
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Check Carbon Monoxide Monitors if applicable				
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Any appliance cables worn or damaged?				
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All rubbish removed from inside and outside the property				
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Any items removed?				
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Urgent Action needed?				
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Reported to Owner?				
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Signed	
Date	

* Or put in a safe place