

# Good advice on fire prevention in apartment blocks



This leaflet is for property owners, housing cooperatives and tenants that would like to know more about how to prevent fires and create safe evacuation in the event of fire.

## Emergency exits

The basic requirement for evacuating a building is that there should always be at least two independent emergency exits.

If one exit is blocked by fire then an alternative exit should be available. In buildings with up to eight storeys then the stairwell is usually used as one of the emergency exits, and a window, where rescue services can help with evacuation using ladders, can be the alternative exit.

In buildings with more than eight storeys there is usually only one emergency exit which places particular demands on the design of the stairwell in order to prevent the spread of smoke and gases. In order to have access to the stairwell one door, in addition to the apartment door, must be passed. It is of the utmost importance that the door leading to the stairwell seals tightly and is complete, that the door closer works as it should and that the bolt grips tightly in the securing plate.

Emergency exits should always be kept free from free-standing objects and inflammable objects, which is why

bicycles, pushchairs, newspapers and boxes may not be kept on the stairwell, even temporarily.

## Access roads

Some properties have ancillary access roads as a condition of planning permission and these access roads are an absolute necessity in the event of evacuations and fire-fighting. Access roads are to be well marked, kept free from obstructions and cleared of snow during the winter months

## Basements and attics

- Passageways in basements and attics shall be kept free from free-standing objects and inflammable material.
- Inflammable gases and liquids or explosive material may not be stored in basements and attics.
- Doors to basements and attics must be kept closed and locked.
- Good organization and orderliness shall prevail in order to help prevent fires.

Remember that most arson attacks take

place in basements, refuse rooms, stairwells and attics. Keep arsonists out!

## Fire prevention equipment

The majority of apartment blocks in the country have fire prevention equipment installed. These could be, for example, smoke dampers or fans allowing fire and smoke evacuation from stairwells, basements and garages, or conduits to facilitate the transport of water by rescue services.

The above-mentioned equipment should be inspected at regular intervals with attention paid to function, marking and possible damage. It is the duty of the property owner/housing cooperative to inspect the equipment.

## What does the law say?

According to the law (2003:778) on the prevention of accidents 2 chap 2 § "the owner or the beneficial occupier shall keep equipment for the extinguishing of fires and the saving of lives in a fire or other accident and also take the necessary measures to prevent fire and

to prevent or limit damage/injury arising from fire”.

In brief, the above-mentioned means that both tenants/apartment owners and property owners/housing cooperatives are responsible for following the law. Residents must follow the rules that apply to the building in question and the owners must ensure that rules are established

and that fire prevention equipment is inspected and maintained.

### Smoke alarms

There is a specific advisory leaflet on smoke alarms published by the Swedish Fire Protection Association.

The National Rescue Services Agency has also published advice on

residential smoke alarms (2007:1). Look at se [www.brandskyddsforeningen.se](http://www.brandskyddsforeningen.se) and [www.msbmyndigheten.se](http://www.msbmyndigheten.se) for more information.

Smoke alarms can save your life. Make sure that you always have a working smoke alarm at home.

## ALWAYS CALL 112 IN THE EVENT OF FIRE

The Swedish Fire Protection Association is a member organization which works towards making Sweden a safer place. Through information and training we help people, companies and organizations to take responsibility for fire prevention. 08-588 474 00. [www.brandskyddsforeningen.se](http://www.brandskyddsforeningen.se)