



vantify
CONSULTANCY

Fire Risk Assessments

Residential Property (Type 1)

RESOURCE BROCHURE



1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and Fire Safety Act 2021 apply in England and Wales and cover general fire precautions and other fire safety duties, which are needed to protect 'relevant persons' in case of fire in and around most premises. The Fire Safety Order requires fire precautions to be put in place 'where necessary' and to the extent that it is reasonable and practicable in the circumstances of the case.
- 1.2 Responsibility for complying with the Fire Safety Order and Fire Safety Act rests with the 'responsible person'. In a workplace, this is the employer and any other person who may have control of any part of the premises, e.g. the occupier or owner. In all other premises the person or people in control of the premises will be responsible. If there is more than one responsible person in any type of premises (e.g. a multi-occupied property), all must take reasonable steps to co-operate and co-ordinate with each other.
- 1.3 If you are the responsible person you must arrange for a fire risk assessment to be carried out by a 'competent person' which must focus on the safety in the event of fire for all 'relevant persons'. It should pay particular attention to those at special risk, such as disabled people, those who have special needs as well as young persons. It must also include consideration of any dangerous substance liable to be on the premises. Your fire risk assessment will help you identify risks that can be removed or reduced and to decide the nature and extent of the general fire precautions you need to take.
- 1.4 There are some other fire safety duties you need to comply with. You must:
 - Appoint one or more competent persons, depending on the size and use of your premises, to carry out any of the preventive and protective measures required by fire safety legislation (you can nominate yourself for this purpose). A competent person is someone with enough training and experience or knowledge and other qualities to be able to implement these measures properly.
 - Provide your employees with clear and relevant information on the risks to them identified by the fire risk assessment, about the measures you have taken to prevent fires, and how these measures will protect them if a fire breaks out.
 - Consult your employees (or their elected representatives) about nominating people to carry out particular roles in connection with fire safety and about proposals for improving the fire precautions.
 - Inform non-employees, such as temporary or contract workers, of the relevant risks to them, and provide them with information about who are the nominated competent persons, and about the fire safety procedures for the premises.
 - Co-operate and co-ordinate with other responsible persons who also have premises in the building, inform them of any significant risks you find and how you will seek to reduce/ control those risks which might affect the safety of their employees.
 - Provide the employer of any person from an outside organisation who is working in your premises (e.g. an agency providing temporary staff) with clear and relevant information on the risks to those employees and the preventive and protective measures taken - you must also provide those employees with appropriate instructions and relevant information about the risks to them.
 - Consider the presence of any dangerous substances and the risk this presents to relevant persons from fire.
 - Establish a suitable means of contacting the emergency services and provide them with any relevant information about dangerous substances.
 - Provide appropriate information, instruction and training to your employees, during their normal working hours, about the fire precautions in your workplace, when they start working for you, and from time to time throughout the period they work for you.
 - Ensure that the premises and any equipment provided in connection with firefighting, fire detection and warning, or emergency routes and exits are covered by a suitable system of maintenance and are maintained by a competent person in an efficient state, in efficient working order and in good repair.

If you are not the employer but have any control of premises which contain more than one workplace, you are also responsible for ensuring that the requirements of all fire safety legislation are complied with, in those parts over which you have control.

2. Vantify Consultancy's Approach

2.1 Vantify Consultancy will carry out your fire risk assessments in accordance with the guidance and principles set out in PAS 79 Fire risk assessment – Guidance and a recommended methodology.

The fundamental approach is based on the 5 steps of a risk assessment contained in the guides:

- Step 1 – Identify fire hazards.
- Step 2 – Identify people at risk.
- Step 3 – Evaluate, remove, reduce, and protect from risk.
- Step 4 – Record, plan, inform, instruct, and train.
- Step 5 – Review.

2.2 Your Vantify Consultancy consultant will identify the fire hazards on your site as part of the fire risk assessment process. For all the identified hazards, Vantify Consultancy has created control standards and during the fire risk assessment visit would make judgments as to how far you are complying (or not) with the control standards. These judgments are made by assessing your existing control measures in place and determining whether they are satisfactory or not.

2.3 Where your Vantify Consultancy consultant considers your existing controls to be unsatisfactory, i.e. you are not complying with the control standard, they would make recommendations in order to advise you how to either remove the hazard or reduce the risk through improving the level of control.

3. Report Format

3.1 The specific format of the Fire Risk Assessment Report will be tailored to the client; however, it would include the following:

- Executive Summary – including a summary of the key findings and conclusions.
- Fire Safety Action Plan – containing a prioritised plan detailing any risk improvements.
- Fire Risk Assessment – containing a table of risk ratings by subject.
- Protocol – confirming the fire risk assessment methodology and risk rating and advice priority definitions.

3.2 With specific reference to the Fire Safety Action Plan, advice will be prioritised on the likelihood of enforcement action being taken, i.e., the failure would result in:

- Enforcement Notice being served.
- Warning letter being received.
- Advice being issued.

4. Residential Fire Risk Assessment Types

4.1 The guidance detailed in the Fire Safety in Purpose-Built Block of Flats Guide published by the Local Government Group will be used as the basis for determining the adequacy of fire safety standards in purpose-built blocks of flats. The scope of this guide excludes buildings converted into blocks of flats. However, the guidance contained in this guide will largely be applicable to such buildings, provided that – at the time of conversion – the work was carried out in accordance with the then current Building Regulations.

In particular, the guidance is likely to be relevant to conversions in which, as a result of compartmentation, a 'stay-put' policy is appropriate. Furthermore, relevant British Standards will also be referred to together with Fire Safety: Approved Document B - Building Regulation in England covering fire safety matters within and around dwelling houses.

4.2 The scope of the fire risk assessment will be relevant to the nature of the premises and the amount known in respect of the structural protection. There are, in principle, four different types of fire risk assessment that can be carried out for blocks of flats. They differ in the extent to which the building is inspected.

5. Type 1 – Common parts only (non-destructive)

Introduction

- 5.1 A Type 1 fire risk assessment is the basic fire risk assessment required for the purpose of satisfying fire safety legislation.
- 5.2 The inspection of the building is non-destructive. But, as well as considering the arrangements for means of escape, the fire risk assessment includes examination of at least a sample of flat entrance doors. It also considers, so far as reasonably practicable, the separating construction between the flats and the common parts without any opening up of construction. With this type of fire assessment, there is no need to enter the flats beyond the entrance door, unless common spaces include loft space only accessible from individual flats. It will be expected to all enter flats which contain loft hatches to communal loft spaces, remove void tape, undertake a head and shoulders inspection of loft space, replace void tape before leaving.
- 5.3 Where common parts contain false ceilings that are demountable, samples of false ceiling tiles that are readily accessible must be taken. At the same time, a sample of service risers can be opened, if during the inspection such access is practically possible.
- 5.4 Inadequate compartmentation and poor fire stopping can lead to serious deficiencies in fire protection to the structure, but if this is not apparent, a Type 1 inspection is adequate for flats that are purpose built. If any doubts arise, then, the action plan may recommend that one of the other types of fire risk assessment be carried out or that further investigation be carried out by specialists. This must not be a generic recommendation for this Type 1 assessment and must clearly identify the issues that give rise to doubts.

Scope

- 5.5 Vantify Consultancy will carry out a fire risk assessment of life safety provisions to satisfy the requirements of the applicable fire safety legislation.
- 5.6 Our assessor(s) will inspect the readily accessible common areas of the property, discuss fire safety provisions with onsite staff and prepare a risk assessment report.
- 5.7 A Type 1 fire risk assessment will be completed as defined by the LGA Guidance - Fire safety in purpose-built blocks of flats.
- 5.8 A Type 1 fire risk assessment is non-destructive / non-intrusive and covers all accessible common areas of the property, plus a sample of flat entrance doors.
- 5.9 The risk assessment also considers, so far as reasonably practicable, the separating construction between the flats and the common areas.
- 5.10 Entry to flats beyond the area of the flat entrance door, is not normally involved but may be requested to confirm if automatic detection is provided in flats, if this information is not known to the property manager.
- 5.11 An inspection of a 10% sample of flat entrance doors will be included in the scope of the risk assessment.
- 5.12 The risk assessor will visually inspect areas from floor level and will include areas reasonably and safely accessible from step ladders.
- 5.13 Unless there is reason to consider serious deficiencies in the structural fire protection of the property, a Type 1 fire risk assessment will normally be sufficient for most purpose-built blocks of flats. Where this is not considered sufficient, the risk assessor will recommend a destructive / intrusive risk assessment be completed.

Methodology

- 5.14 At the time of the site visit, the risk assessor will review relevant service and maintenance documentation held on site / on the client's risk management system e.g. Vantify Risk Manager.
- 5.15 Relevant documentation may include, but is not limited to, evidence of staff training, policies and procedures, fire strategy document, service and maintenance records.

5.16 During the site visit the risk assessor will obtain information on the property, including, but not limited to:

- Duty holder
- Relevant Person
- Age, size, height and construction of the property
- Extent of the areas under the client's responsibility
- No. of residential dwellings
- Means of escape
- Passive and active fire protection measures
- History of fire
- History of Enforcement Notices
- Arrangements for the emergency services
- Fire evacuation procedure and policy
- Potential sources of ignition
- Staff training
- Fire drills

Co-operation and co-ordination with occupiers and neighbouring premises

5.17 The risk assessor will visit all common areas and inspect voids, cupboards, ducts, service risers and fire doors which are reasonably accessible.

5.18 If the risk assessor identifies matters on site that require immediate attention, these will be raised as Priority 1 actions in the risk assessment report. The client will also be notified immediately.

5.19 The client is responsible for providing the risk assessor with information and access pertaining to all common areas on site.

5.20 The risk assessor will detail known limitations / exclusions within the body of the risk assessment report.

5.21 The risk assessor will detail areas accessed in the body of the risk assessment report.

Limitations and Exclusions

5.22 The risk assessment considers life safety only. Should the client wish to include business continuity or property protection issues, then a scope of separate services will be prepared.

5.23 Risk assessments are subjective in their nature. It cannot be guaranteed that two risk assessors, or indeed a risk assessor and Enforcing Body will identify the same level of fire risk on site.

5.24 The fire risk assessment is non-destruction and non-intrusive. The fire risk assessor will not make any holes, use any tools, operate any equipment or take any samples whilst on site.

5.25 Whilst the risk assessor will comment on service and maintenance records of equipment, the mechanical and electrical worthiness of such plant and equipment is beyond the scope of the fire risk assessment.

5.26 If the risk assessor will not enter any dwellings on site other than as necessary to assess measures required under relevant fire safety legislation. In any case, any access to dwellings must be accompanied by a representative of the client.

5.27 The assessment of the building compartmentation and its integrity (including floor and ceiling voids) is not covered within the scope of the fire risk assessment. Such areas will be visually inspected where reasonably practicable; the fire risk assessment is not a compartmentation condition survey.

5.28 The fire risk assessment document does not form the property fire strategy or emergency plan.

5.29 The fire risk assessment document will not include site plans or drawings.

5.30 Actions within the risk assessment set out what Vantify Consultancy feels needs to be done but not how it is to be done. That is, Vantify Consultancy does not provide a specification or methodology for the necessary works as a part of this report. Vantify Consultancy are Health, Safety and Fire Practitioners, but they are not Architects; Surveyors; Building Services Engineers etc.

5.31 Responsibility for safe, appropriate and legal implementation of any remedial action recommendations rests with the client.

Unless there is reason to expect serious deficiencies in structural fire protection – such as inadequate compartmentation, or poor fire stopping – a Type 1 inspection will normally be sufficient for most blocks of purpose-built flats. Where doubt exists in relation to these matters, the action plan of a Type 1 fire risk assessment may recommend that one of the other types of fire risk assessment be carried out or that further investigation be carried out by specialists.

Special Note on cladding and external wall construction

The Fire Safety Act 2021 states that in relation to the Regulatory Reform (fire Safety) Order 2005:

“(1A) Where a building contains two or more sets of domestic premises, the things to which this order applies include—

(a) the building’s structure and external walls and any common parts;

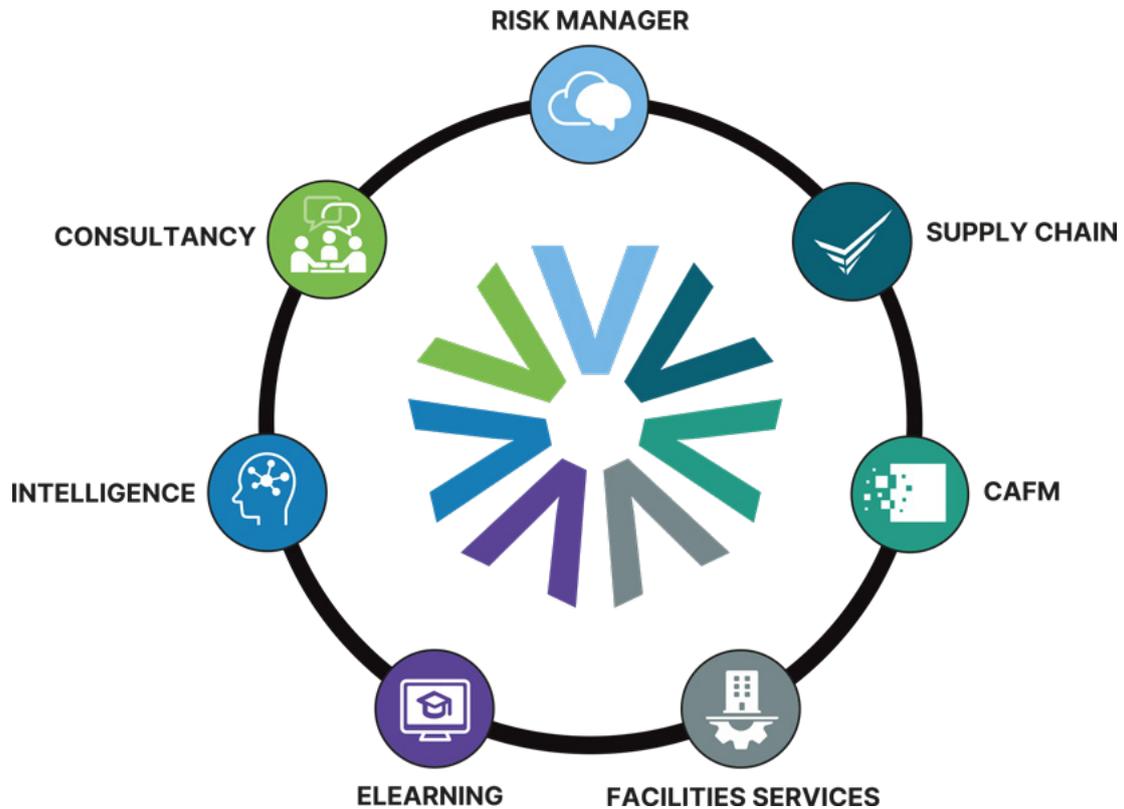
(b) all doors between the domestic premises and common parts (so far as not falling within sub-paragraph (a)).”

Fire risk assessments undertaken by Vantify Consultancy, in buildings which contain two or more sets of domestic premises, will include a non-invasive, non-destructive, visual inspection of the external walls from ground height only. Where external walls can be identified as low risk from this inspection this will be noted in the fire risk assessment. Where an assessor cannot deem the external walls as low risk, either from the material present, lack of information on the construction on the external walls, or due to the height of the building, the assessor will indicate the need for a Fire Risk Appraisal of External walls to be carried out via the fire risk assessment action plan.

Vantify Consultancy does not carry out PAS9980 Fire Risk Appraisal of External Walls & provision of EWS1 forms. Vantify Consultancy will not be accepting or processing any orders for Fire Risk Appraisal of External Walls and EWS1 forms.

Vantify Consultancy can provide external referral routes and third-party options to support clients needing access to this service, although these are entirely independent and not associated or contracted by Vantify Consultancy.

The Vantify Ecosystem



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William Martin, Meridian, Prosure360, and Elogs have joined forces to create Vantify® - our unified ecosystem that provides a single vantage point for compliance and risk management.