

FIRE SAFETY IN DOMESTIC DWELLINGS

The Building Regulations – 1997 and the Building Control Regulations – 1997 became operative on 1 July, 1998.

Part B: Fire Safety of the Second Schedule to the Building Regulations- 1997, requires that a building shall be designed and constructed so that there is adequate means of escape in case of fire from the building to a place of safety outside the building, capable of being safely and effectively used.

Section 1.5 of Technical Guidance Document B: Fire Safety (published by the Department of the Environment and Local Government) provides recommendations for single occupancy dwelling houses.

The following highlights some of the matters to be considered:

Windows for Escape Purposes

- A habitable room should not be an inner room unless it is provided with a window suitable for escape or rescue.
- **Every bedroom** should have a window suitable for escape or rescue purposes.
- These windows should have an unobstructed opening section not less than 850mm high x 500mm wide – secured by readily openable fastenings with cill height 800mm – 1100mm over floor level (600mm – 1100mm for a rooflight).
- If escape is through a dormer window or rooflight, the cill or bottom of rooflight should be maximum 1500mm, measured along the roof.
- The ground below should be free from obstructions, suitable for a ladder and of sufficient size to provide a place of safety from a fire in the house.
- Any balcony should have a railing/barrier for safety.

Fire Detection and Alarm System

- The installation of **mains powered smoke alarms** is now compulsory in all new dwelling houses. Every house should have a fire detection and alarm system to at least type LD3 of BS 5839: Part 6 1995.

General Requirements for a typical 2-storey dwelling

- A stairway serving an upper storey should be enclosed by means of storey height construction, (which need not be fire resisting) and discharge directly to the open air.
- In the less desirable event of an **open-plan** arrangement, the stairway should discharge within 4.5m of a ground-floor door leading directly to the open air; there must be an LD2 type fire detection and alarm system; all upper storey habitable rooms must have a window for escape (see above).
- Surface linings of walls and ceilings should be equal or better than Class 3 in bathrooms and toilets and Class 1 in other spaces. (TGD-B, 2.1.).
- Roof coverings should have not less than AA, AB or AC classifications described in BS 476: Part 3.
- The wall separating semi-detached dwellings should achieve a minimum of 60 minutes fire resistance and should be constructed as a compartment wall. (TGD-B, 3.2).
- The walls and floors between a house and garage should achieve a minimum 30 minutes fire resistance. A self-closing fire door should be provided minimum FD 30 performance with 100mm step up from garage. (TGD-B,3.2).
- Builders and Designers of dwelling houses should consult **Technical Guidance Document B – Fire Safety** for guidance on how to comply with Part B of the Second Schedule to the Building Regulations 1997. It must be possible to demonstrate that the Regulations have been met.

The Building Control Section, Tipperary SR County Council monitors compliance with the Buildings Regulations. Guidance and advice in relation to compliance with the relevant fire safety provisions can be obtained from the Building Control Section.

This information sheet does not purport to be a comprehensive review of the Regulations or Technical Guidance Documents. Persons should always obtain professional advice for their specific situation. Tipperary SR County Council will not accept any liability arising out of reliance on any aspect of this information sheet.