

## SERVICE UPDATE

<b><u>Name of Function:</u></b>	Building Standards
<b><u>Date:</u></b>	9 <sup>th</sup> March 2021
<b><u>Title of Update:</u></b>	Changes to Building Regulations
<b><u>Report Author:</u></b>	Gordon Spence
<b><u>Chief Officer:</u></b>	Gale Beattie
<b><u>Contact Details:</u></b>	<a href="mailto:gspence@aberdeencity.gov.uk">gspence@aberdeencity.gov.uk</a> Tel: 07919 691734

### **UPDATE:**

To provide an update on new building regulation legislation under the Building (Scotland) Act 2003 introduced from 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021.

The main change is a requirement for automatic fire suppression systems in all new flats, new social housing dwellings and new shared multi-occupancy residential buildings. These are related to changes in the fire safety section within Section 2 (Fire) in both the domestic and non-domestic handbooks associated with the regulations.

**Flats** are defined as: a dwelling on one storey, forming part of a building from some other part of which it is divided horizontally, and includes a dwelling of which the main entrance door and associated hall are on a different storey from the remainder of the dwelling.

**Social Housing dwelling** is defined as: a dwelling occupied by virtue of a Scottish secure tenancy within the meaning of section 11 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. This relates principally to housing provided by a local authority or a registered social housing provider.

**Shared multi-occupancy residential building** is defined as: a residential building occupied as a sole or main residence by more than six individuals where those occupying the building, or part of the building, share the use of sanitary facilities or facilities for the preparation of cooked food with other persons occupying the building, or part of the building. An example of this type of building is large student accommodation.

The legislation applies to new buildings of the above types or existing buildings being converted into the above types. The legislation is not retro applied to existing buildings of these types.

In general, automatic fire suppression systems take 2 forms:

1. A traditional sprinkler system with exposed or concealed sprinkler heads.
2. A watermist system with nozzles spraying a fine mist to suppress smoke and heat

Automatic fire suppression systems are primarily designed for life safety purposes and involve no manual input from occupants to activate. Successful activation can provide occupants, including vulnerable occupants, with additional time to escape following the outbreak of fire.

An added benefit of the system is that damage and disruption caused by fire can be greatly reduced.

Evidence has shown that incidences of fire occur more often in social housing environments than mainstream housing and this resulted in David Stewart MSP bringing forward a Bill to require suppression system in this type of housing. Running in parallel, In the aftermath of the Grenfell tragedy, a Ministerial Working Group was set up to review fire safety standards. The Group concluded that the need for suppression systems should be extended to flats and a newly created category of building called “shared multi-occupancy residential buildings”. This requirement was added to the consultation process for the Bill.

Building standards staff will be responsible for ensuring that buildings are provided with these systems as part of the building warrant process. This involves checking that the designer and installers of such systems are suitably qualified and accredited.

Suppression systems are already a requirement in certain types of new buildings, for example, school buildings or sheltered housing complexes. Building Standards staff are therefore already appropriately qualified to check the relevant information for compliance. Additional training has been provided to clarify the requirements in these new building types.