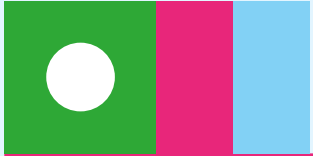


# Safety in your communal areas

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**Clear Communal Spaces policy**





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**As your landlord, your safety is important to us. We are responsible for keeping the areas where you live safe, and we need your help to do this.**

**This leaflet gives you important information about safety in communal areas in your home/building and what you need to do to help keep your home safe.**

## What are communal areas?

Communal areas are the areas that everyone can access including:

- entrance lobbies
- landings
- corridors
- stairwells
- meter cupboards
- lifts
- open walkways



## Why do communal areas need to be kept clear?

We have a legal obligation to ensure the building and communal areas meet fire safety requirements. We have to make sure effective fire evacuation arrangements are in place so it is important that communal areas are kept tidy so that if there is a fire, there is nothing that could:

- prevent people escaping from the building
- stop the fire services carrying out their duties
- give off toxic smoke and gas when burning
- explode due to high temperatures (e.g. glass)
- cause the fire to spread more quickly

## Using the communal areas – what you need to do

Part of our job is to prevent problems before they become a danger. To help us keep you and other residents as safe as we can please follow these rules.

### In the communal areas:

- do not store your possessions
- do not leave any unwanted goods
- do not display decorative items like pictures or plant pots

These measures have been developed with our specialist fire risk assessors to help minimise the risks to our residents in the event of a fire.



## What is not permitted in communal areas?

This includes, but is not limited to:

- pushchairs
- bicycles/motorbikes/mopeds
- door mats
- children's toys
- artificial/live plants
- decorative furniture e.g. bookcases/tables
- shoes, boots, and trainers including shoe racks
- electrical equipment
- flammable liquids
- mobility scooters
- any other decorative items
- washing lines/racks
- items of furniture and goods waiting for disposal



Communal areas do not belong to any resident, including the area immediately outside of your front door.

Residents are not permitted to use communal areas to store or dispose of any belongings, rubbish or personal items. Communal areas must be kept free from obstructions at all times.

You can read our full Clear Communal Spaces policy on our website [www.brighterplaces.co.uk/publications](http://www.brighterplaces.co.uk/publications)

## Why are we taking action now?

Recent changes in fire safety legislation have placed extra responsibilities on us as your landlord. These measures help minimise the risks to you and help us meet our legal obligations.

If there was a fire in your building, we must make sure that there is nothing in the communal areas to stop people getting out safely or prevents the fire service from doing its job.

For example: some items left in communal areas could fuel a fire, give off toxic smoke that could affect you or cause you to trip up and hinder your safe escape.

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 says we must:

- carry out risk assessments which includes reviewing escape routes such as communal areas
- make sure that the structure of our buildings and the communal areas within them meet fire and safety regulations
- work closely with the fire service and local environmental health departments to make sure risks to residents in blocks of flats are minimised

## What will happen to items left in the communal area?

Your Housing Officer will inspect the communal areas regularly to check that no personal items are being stored there. They will leave a notice on any items left in the communal area asking the owner to remove it by a specified date. If the owner does not remove the item, **we will remove it at a charge of £50 per item and dispose of it after 28 days if it is not claimed.**



## Additional safety advice – what you can do

### Individual flat entrance doors

These usually form part of the fire protection of the building. No alterations or replacement of doors should be made without written consent from us. Please DO NOT interfere with or remove any door closer that is provided on a door. Also please DO NOT prop open any doors.

### Smoking

It is against the law to smoke in any communal area. In addition, we operate a strict NO SMOKING Policy in all communal areas which MUST be adhered to. This includes the use of e-cigarettes.

### Balconies

Present a high level of risk. If you have a balcony, any stored items must be fireproof. Barbecues, fuel containers and gas bottles are prohibited.

### Rubbish

Please note that it is a breach of your tenancy/lease to dump rubbish. If rubbish is proven to have been left by you or your visitor, you will be charged for its removal.

### Mobility aids

If you have a mobility aid that is currently stored in the communal area please contact your Housing Officer urgently on **0117 942 4600** to discuss suitable storage away from the communal area.

## Fire prevention tips – keep yourself safe in your home

- test your fire alarm regularly, ideally once a month
- always keep a close eye on your cooking – especially if you use a chip pan
- keep all appliances and combustible materials (e.g. tea towels and kitchen roll) away from the cooker when lit
- never leave burning candles unattended and make sure they are in a suitable holder
- never smoke in bed
- don't overload electrical extension leads/adapters

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You can see this leaflet on our website  
[www.brighterplaces.co.uk/safety-in-your-communal-areas](http://www.brighterplaces.co.uk/safety-in-your-communal-areas)

If you would like this leaflet in another format such as large print or another language, please contact us on 0117 942 4600.