

Fire Safety

Guidelines for
boarding houses



These guidelines provide general information about City of Sydney's requirements for fire safety in boarding houses.

They are intended to assist boarding house **owners**, **operators** and **occupants** (the “triple **O**” factor) understand what steps can be taken to protect their assets, jobs, health and safety from the risk of fire.

The building owner is responsible to ensure required fire safety measures installed within the boarding house are maintained so they work during a fire emergency.

Fire safety plans



All boarding houses should have a fire escape plan. An escape plan is a step by step written instruction detailing necessary actions for evacuation in case of a fire emergency. The plan should have the following:

- Evacuation routes detailing paths of travel and the locations of the building's exits
- Assembly point details (where occupants should gather)
- A detailed plan of action to be taken after activation of a fire alarm.

The escape plan should be posted in obvious locations in common areas and behind each bedroom door. Remember in a fire emergency once you're outside never go back inside until safe to do so and only when instructed by the Fire and Rescue Officer.

Fire safety measures



Every boarding house is required to have suitable fire safety measures.

These measures include: smoke alarms; evacuation lighting; fire extinguishers and fire blankets to name a few.

These measures can help save lives through early warning and the availability of first aid fire fighting equipment. As an operator or occupier it is important to report defective or missing fire safety equipment to the owner and ensure that your equipment is accessible at all times.

Fire safety management



Good fire safety management involves the owner, operator and occupants following some simple steps to reduce the likelihood of an outbreak and impact of a fire.

Fire hazards can be reduced by:

- Maintaining clear exit paths
- avoiding storing material in pathways and near doors
- ensuring maintenance of electrical equipment and wiring.

Cooking is a leading cause

of fire and should never be left unattended or permitted in individual rooms. Rather, cooking should be confined to common kitchen areas protected with fire fighting equipment and kept in a clean and uncluttered state.

The use of candles is also a fire risk and should be avoided where possible. If smoking is permitted within the building, smokers should ensure that ash trays are regularly emptied and checked before going to bed to make sure smouldering cigarettes are extinguished. The placement of space heaters should be carefully considered with no combustibles placed within at least a metre of the heater.

Annual Fire Safety Statement (AFSS)



Each year boarding house owners are required by state regulation to provide an Annual Fire Safety Statement (AFSS) to the local council and Fire and Rescue NSW.

The AFSS is a statement that certifies each required fire safety measure installed in the building complies with applicable fire safety standards and council regulations. The AFSS should be prominently displayed within the building.

Council inspections

Council officers will conduct random inspections of boarding houses either unannounced or by organised arrangement depending on the individual circumstance.

If problems are found during the inspection, a Council fire safety notice can be issued. This will normally be followed by an Order requiring the owner or operator to meet their obligations with respect to state fire safety requirements.

Council officers can also give on the spot penalties to individuals who commit fire safety offences.

Always remember in any fire situation to evacuate the building and telephone Fire and Rescue NSW on 000 giving your name and building location.

Further information

For further information about fire safety or other Council services you can visit our website at **www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au** or for specific fire safety advice **www.fire.nsw.gov.au**

By following these simple steps we can all live in a safer environment.