

Fire Safety Advice for North Star Customers

June 2023

Dear Customer,

Find enclosed some important fire safety information and advice which includes advice on fire doors, evacuation procedures and general home fire safety advice.

A fire in your home could be catastrophic however by following the advice enclosed you could prevent a fire from starting and avoid a terrible life changing event and damage to your personal belongings.

Your safety is paramount to us and we want to ensure you are fully aware of the action to take in the unlikely event of a fire in your home or within the communal areas of your building. We also want you to talk to us if you have any fire safety concerns or need more fire safety information relating to the building you live in.

Every year, North Star carry out essential safety checks in your home, including an annual boiler service and an electrical installation inspection every 5 years. We also inspect fire doors regularly including your flat entrance door. It is essential that when an appointment is made to carry out one of these essential checks you are in your property to let the inspectors in to complete their work.

North Star also engage specialist accredited contractors to carry out fire risk assessments annually in the communal areas, test fire alarm systems, check emergency lighting and ensure communal areas are safe for our customers and visitors.

We would value your engagement with us to prevent a fire starting in your building and report anything to us that you think could be a fire safety concern. This could include things like combustible items being stored in communal areas, insecure entrance doors, fire door concerns or blocked exit routes.

We very much appreciate your on-going cooperation with North Star and if you have any enquiries about the enclosed advice then please contact us on 03000110011 or email us at customer.services@northstarhg.co.uk .

Emma Speight



Executive Director of Assets and Growth

Responsible Person for Fire Safety

North Star Housing Group

Home Fire safety Advice

Every year in the UK, avoidable fires start in homes which result in injury or death and severe property damage. The effect of a fire and the resulting loss has a huge impact on the people involved. The following advice should help in preventing a fire from starting.

Servicing and Inspections of your Heating and Electrical systems

It is important that you are at home during an appointment to give access to our engineers and electricians to carry out vital safety checks on your heating and electrical systems.

Electrics

Avoid overloading sockets or using multiple extension leads (daisy chaining) as heat can build up in cables and cause a fire. Check for any damage to cables or the appliance, unplug electrical appliances if not in use and make sure you don't have any heavy items including furniture, on top of cables as this can damage the cable and start a fire. Don't leave appliances on 'standby' as this could be a potential source of a fire and you will also save money! Buy electrical appliances from reputable sellers and repair or dispose of faulty electrical appliances.

Gas

Do not store combustibles or other items in boiler cupboards as it may affect electrical and gas connections to the boiler causing a fire risk. Do not store gas cylinders inside your home. If you smell gas in your home, turn off the main gas valve located next to your gas meter, open your doors and windows to ventilate the property and evacuate everyone from your home. Do not use a phone inside the property or turn switches on or off.

When outside of the property, phone the National Gas Emergencies number on 0800 111 999. Follow the advice of the emergency adviser and wait for the gas engineer to arrive. Do not re-enter your home.

Candles

Ensure candles are not close to combustibles including curtains and soft furnishings. Don't leave candles unattended and ensure you extinguish them when not in use.

Heaters

Keep combustibles at least 1 meter away from a heater, don't leave an open fire unattended including garden heating equipment and barbeques. Replace faulty heating equipment.

Cooking

Don't leave cooking unattended, keep combustible items away from the oven and hob. Clean any grease build up and residues. Use a deep fat fryer with thermal control rather than a chip pan. Make sure your cooker controls are fully turned off when you finish cooking.

Smoking

Avoid smoking in bed or when you are feeling tired, make sure cigarette ends are properly extinguished. Do not smoke in communal shared areas.

Communal Shared Areas

Keep staircases and exit routes clear. Do not store anything in communal areas including bikes, pushchairs, shoes, rubbish and boxes. Communal shared areas must be kept totally clear of storage at all times. Smoking in communal area is against the law and is not permitted.

Fire Doors

If you live in a flat that has a communal area shared with other flats then your flat entrance door will be a fire door. Your flat entrance door should be able to close fully into the frame unaided. Do not remove the door closer or other door furniture and do not drill into or damage the door. Check your door regularly and If your door does not close fully, has a fault or is damaged then please report this to North Star immediately. Further information on fire doors is enclosed.

Evacuation Plan

Familiarise yourself with your escape routes and the information on fire action notices displayed in the communal areas. Help to keep communal areas clear and report any concerns. Specific action to take in the event of a fire in your building is included with this information.

Children

Supervise young children near ovens and fires. Keep matches and lighters out of reach.

Garden Fire Safety

Take care if having a barbeque or using a fire pit in the garden. Keep heated appliances away from the building, wooden fences, bins and trees. Never empty hot ashes into bins.

Smoke Detectors

North Star provide smoke detectors in your property. Smoke detectors can save lives and alert you that there is a fire in your home. The detector will sound an alarm when smoke particles reach the detector. Never remove a smoke detector and it is recommended to test them weekly.

Home Insurance

It is strongly advised that you have home insurance in place which will help replace any costly items within your home, including furniture, TV's, phones and computer equipment. Expensive items could get accidentally damaged or destroyed in a fire situation. North Star can give advice on obtaining home insurance at a very competitive rate which will give you peace of mind knowing that you can replace those costly items without costing the earth. For more information on home insurance please contact your Housing Officer at North Star on 03000 110 011.

Reporting Fire Safety Concerns and for Further Fire Safety Advice

If you have any fire safety concerns or require further fire safety advice then please contact North Star Customer Services on 03000 110 011 or email:

customer.services@northstarhq.co.uk

Alternatively, you can contact your local fire authority for advice or to carry out a home fire safety welfare check:

Cleveland Fire Brigade 01429 872311

Durham and Darlington Fire Brigade 0345 305 8383

Tyne and Wear Fire Brigade 0800 032 7777

Customer Evacuation Procedures

Simultaneous Evacuation

Your building has a simultaneous evacuation procedure in place. This means that in the event of a fire alarm activation or discovery of fire, everyone must evacuate out of the building to an assembly point or place of safety. There are fire action notices displayed in your building which highlights a simultaneous evacuation procedure.

If you hear the fire alarm or discover a fire:

- Close your internal doors and immediately evacuate out of your flat, with family members and any visitors, making sure your flat entrance door fully closes behind you
- We strongly advise that you do not attempt to extinguish a fire or use fire extinguishers as this may delay your evacuation and make the fire worse.
- Operate the nearest fire alarm call point (if fitted in your building)
- Evacuate to a place of safety away from the building
- Phone '999' and request for the fire service, giving your name and address and any information you know about the cause of the fire alarm activation.
- Remain in a safe place away from the building until the fire service arrives
- You will only be allowed back into the building once the fire service confirms it is safe to do so

What if there is smoke or fire in the communal area?

- If it is too dangerous to evacuate from your flat, due to smoke or fire in the communal area, you and your family / visitors must remain inside your flat
- Ensure your flat entrance door is fully closed
- Close your internal doors
- Remain in a room with your family members or visitors
- Phone '999' giving your name and address and explain that you are unable to evacuate the building
- Wait for fire service assistance
- The Fire Service will deal with the incident and advise whether it is safe to re-enter your home

Customer Support

If your flat is inhabitable due to fire damage then you must contact North Star Customer Services on 03000110011 or email us on customer.services@northstarhg.co.uk

Important Fire door information for our Customers

Your flat main entrance door is a fire door and is essential to the safety of you, your family and your home. The door is an essential part of the fire compartmentation of your home and will prevent fire, heat and smoke passing through the door and frame when it is fully closed.

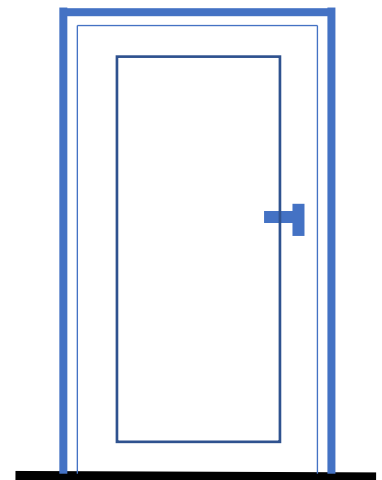
Never wedge your fire door open as this will allow fire and toxic smoke enter your property if there is a fire. Keep your door closed.

Your fire door:

- Is only effective when it is fully closed.
- Has fire rated components such as the door closer, hinges and lock
- A fire door closer is fitted to ensure that it fully closes the door unaided to a fully closed position
- Intumescent fire seals are fitted around the door or frame to create a seal between the frame and door, preventing smoke and fire passing through
- Fire resistant hinges are fitted, these should not be adjusted or replaced with a different type of hinge
- Intumescent material is fitted within the components of the door such as letter plates and viewers

Your door must not be modified in any way

- Don't add any additional locks or knockers
- Don't drill or cut holes into the door or remove seals
- Don't remove the door closer or any other component fitted to the door

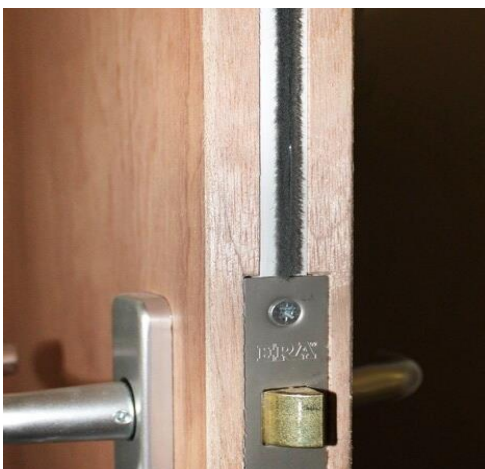


Essential Components on your Fire Door



Fire Door Closer

The door closer is designed to fully close your door unaided into the door frame from any open angle. Door closers must not be removed or changed to a different closer.



Intumescent Smoke Seals

Intumescent smoke seals stop heat and smoke from passing through the door frame. When heat is near the door the seals expand between the frame and door to stop heat from passing through the frame. The door must be able to close fully for the smoke seals to work properly.



The Door and its Components

The door and all its components including smoke seals, closer, handles, hinges and letter plate are designed to hold back fire and smoke for a minimum of 30 minutes. It is important that the door and components are undamaged and are in place for a fire door to work properly. The gaps around the top and sides of the door should not exceed 3mm and the gap at the bottom of the door should not exceed 8mm.

If your fire door is damaged, you notice a defect or the door is not closing properly, you must report this to North Star on 03000110011 or email customer services customer.services@northstarhg.co.uk