

Grenfell Tower Inquiry – Phase 1 report summary

Evacuation recommendations

- The development of national guidelines for carrying out partial or total evacuations of high-rise buildings – including protecting fire access routes and procedures for evacuating people who require assistance
- Fire services develop policies for partial or total evacuation of high rises
- Owners and managers be required to draw up and keep under review evacuation plans, with copies provided to local fire and rescue services and placed in an information box on the premises
- All high-rise buildings be equipped with facilities to enable the sending of an evacuation signal to the whole or a selected part of the building
- Owners and managers be required by law to prepare personal evacuation plans for residents who may struggle to do so personally, with information about them stored in the premise's information box
- All fire services be equipped with smoke hoods to help evacuate residents down smoke-filled stairs

Fire door recommendations

- An urgent inspection of fire doors in all buildings containing separate dwellings, whether or not they are high rises
- A legal requirement on the owner or manager of these buildings to check doors at least every three months to ensure self-closing devices are working effectively

Sprinkler recommendations

Noting the recommendation from the coroner investigating the Lakanal House fire that the use of sprinklers be encouraged, Sir Martin said that some of his experts had “urged me to go a step further and to recommend such systems be installed in all existing high-rise buildings”.

He said that sprinklers have a very effective part to play in an overall scheme of fire safety, but that he had not yet heard evidence about their use. He said that he could make no recommendations at this stage, but that he would consider the matter in phase two.

Internal signage recommendations

Floor numbers in the tower were not clearly marked and markings were not updated when the floor numbers changed following the refurbishment. Sir Martin said that all high-rise buildings should have floors clearly marked in a prominent place, which would be visible in low light or smoky conditions. Given that not all residents of Grenfell could read fire information signs, he said this should now be provided in a means that all residents can understand.

Use of combustible materials recommendations

Sir Martin said the original fire in the kitchen was no more than an ordinary kitchen fire that spread to the cladding because of “the proximity of combustible materials to the kitchen windows” – such as the uPVC frames.

He said this is a matter that “it would be sensible” for owners of other high-rise buildings to check.

A total of 97 buildings in the social housing sector and 168 in the private sector have not yet seen the work complete. Sir Martin said the work must be completed “as vigorously as possible”.

He said particular attention should be paid to decorative features, given the crucial role played by the architectural crown at Grenfell in spreading the fire around the building. Given the decision to ban combustible materials on new buildings last year, he did not call for further restrictions on their use.

Fire service: knowledge and understanding of materials in high-rise buildings recommendations

Sir Martin raised concern that junior firefighters were not aware of the danger of cladding fires, and that the London Fire Brigade (LFB) was unaware of the combustible materials used to refurbish Grenfell Tower.

He therefore recommended:

- That the owner and manager of every high-rise building is required to provide details of external walls and the materials used to the local fire service, and inform them of any changes
- To ensure that fire services personnel at all levels understand the risk of cladding fires

Recommendations on plans

Sir Martin said that a lack of plans did not unduly hamper fire services at Grenfell, as each floor was laid out in the same way. However, he warned that another building with a more complex layout could pose problems. He recommended:

- That owners and managers of high-rise buildings are required by law to provide paper and electronic versions of building plans of all high rises to local fire services
- To ensure the building contains a premises information box, including a copy of floor plans

Recommendations on lifts

Firefighters were unable to use a mechanism that allows them to take control of the lifts on the night of the fire, hampering their progress and meaning residents could still use the lifts, “in some cases with fatal consequences”. Sir Martin therefore recommended:

- That the owner and manager of every high-rise building be required by law to carry out regular inspections of any lift required for use by firefighters and the mechanism that allows them to take control of it

Personal fire protection

Sir Martin decided not to issue a recommendation that individual flats be provided with fire extinguishers or fire blankets, noting concerns that this could encourage residents to fight fires rather than escape and call the emergency services.

[The full report](#)