

PRESS RELEASE

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HM GoG Publishes New Fire Safety Measures

Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar is today announcing two measures which deal with fire safety. The first is the publication of a new Part E to the Building Rules together with a supporting Approved Document. Part E deals exclusively with fire safety considerations when it comes to buildings and construction. The second measure is the publication of an Integrated Risk Management Plan. This is a three-year plan which builds on the foundations of risk reduction that the Government and the Gibraltar Fire and Rescue Service have already been delivering.

Part E Building Rules

The current provisions on fire safety in the Building Rules originate from 1984 and are outdated. They are based on codes of practice which applied in the UK and which have since been superseded. The codes of practice were replaced by UK Fire Safety British Standards. These, in turn, have also been replaced by the current UK Regulatory Reform Order (RRO). It is on the RRO that the new Part E is based.

Part E is accompanied by an Approved Document. The Approved Document deals with five areas:

1. Means of warning and escape
2. Internal Fire Spread (Linings)
3. Internal Fire Spread (Structure)
4. External Fire Spread
5. Access and facilities for the Fire and Rescue Service

In each area, the Approved Document sets out functional requirements together with recommendations on how each requirement is achieved.

This represents a fundamental shift from the old Rules. Whereas the old Part E of the Building Rules followed a prescriptive approach, the new Part E and Approved Document now follows a risk-based approach. This means that engineered solutions like the ones adopted in Beach View Terraces and Mons Calpe Mews can now be applied.



The risk-based approach means that developers can work with the Fire Safety department to use a wider spectrum of fire safety ideas and initiatives. The Approved Document provides guidance for some of the more common building situations. However, alternative ways of achieving an adequate level of fire safety may be adopted through other methods.

A new aspect of the Approved Document is the section on access and facilities for the Fire and Rescue Service. This not only makes the building safer for the occupants but it also provides and enhances protection for the firefighter.

Provision is also made in the Approved Document for the management of the building ensuring that an adequate management regime from a fire safety perspective is maintained. It also encourages consultation with the Fire and Rescue Services on management issues which affect fire safety.

Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP)

The IRMP sets out the strategic aims and objectives of HMGoG along with the initiatives, activities and performance standards of HMGoG and the Gibraltar Fire and Rescue Service which will help make Gibraltar, its residents, visitors, businesses, properties, environment and infrastructure safer.

At the core of the risk management strategies are measures related to prevention, protection and response.

A key tenet of the IRMP is the analysis and understanding of risk to the community and to the Fire and Rescue Service. It then sets out the risk mitigation principles of prevention, protection and response as well as training and organisational resilience. The IRMP provides for risk management mitigation actions in each of these areas together with a timescale for achieving each particular objective.

The Minister responsible for the Fire and Rescue Service, Gilbert Licudi QC, expressed his satisfaction with the measures announced and said: "The new measures announced today place the emphasis on a risk-based approach and risk management systems on fire safety with the objective of making our community safer from fire hazards. The performance standards and targets which are set are demanding but achievable. They will require focus, energy and commitment not just from the Fire and Rescue Service but from the community as a whole with which the Service will work in order to achieve them."