

What is the Approved Document B(1) (Part B)?

Approved Document B(1) is part of the UK Building Regulations, specifically addressing fire safety in dwellings. It provides detailed guidance on how to meet the legal requirements for fire safety in residential buildings, including new builds, extensions, and material alterations. The document outlines measures to prevent the spread of fire, ensure safe escape routes, and provide adequate fire detection and warning systems. It is a critical resource for architects, builders, and building control professionals in the UK.

Approved Document B(1) falls under Volume 1 of the Building Regulations, which focuses on dwellings (residential buildings). It is part of the broader Approved Document B, which also includes Volume 2 for non-dwelling buildings. The document is regularly updated to reflect advancements in fire safety technology and changes in legislation. The latest revision as of 2025 is aligned with the 2019 edition, incorporating amendments made in 2020 and 2022.

Key Requirements and Applications

1. **Fire Resistance:** Specifies the minimum fire resistance periods for structural elements such as walls, floors, and doors.
2. **Means of Escape:** Provides guidance on the design of escape routes, including staircases, corridors, and exits, to ensure safe evacuation in case of fire.
3. **Fire Detection and Warning Systems:** Mandates the installation of smoke alarms and, in some cases, fire detection systems in dwellings.
4. **External Fire Spread:** Addresses the risk of fire spreading between buildings, including requirements for external walls and roofs.
5. **Access for Firefighters:** Ensures that buildings are designed to facilitate firefighting operations, including access routes and water supply.

Practical Examples

- In a new-build residential development, Approved Document B(1) would require the installation of interconnected smoke alarms on each floor and the use of fire-resistant materials for internal walls and doors.
- For a loft conversion, the document would mandate the provision of a protected escape route and the upgrading of fire resistance in the existing structure.

Related Terms

1. **Fire Compartmentation:** The division of a building into fire-resistant compartments to prevent the spread of fire.
2. **Protected Stairway:** A stairway designed to provide a safe escape route during a fire, typically enclosed with fire-resistant materials.
3. **Fire Door:** A door with a certified fire resistance rating, used to prevent the spread of fire and smoke.
4. **Smoke Alarm:** A device that detects smoke and provides an audible warning to occupants.
5. **Building Regulations Approved Document F:** Focuses on ventilation requirements in dwellings, often considered alongside Part B for comprehensive building design.
6. **Fire Risk Assessment:** A systematic evaluation of a building's fire safety measures, required

under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

7. **Passive Fire Protection:** Measures such as fire-resistant walls and floors that are built into the structure to contain fire.