

Fire Safety in Gaeltacht Households Accommodating Foghlaimoirí Gaeilge



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Chapter 1 - Introduction

Purpose of the Guidance

The purpose of this short Guidance is to assist persons in control of Gaeltacht Households (Bean an Tí), accommodating Foghlaimeoirí Gaeilge, in discharging their statutory responsibilities under the Fire Services Act 1981 & 2003. In particular the Act provides that:

Persons in control of these premises are required:

- To take all reasonable measures to guard against the outbreak of fire on such premises,
- To provide reasonable fire safety measures for such premises and prepare and provide appropriate fire safety procedures for ensuring the safety of persons on such premises,
- Ensure that the fire safety measures and procedures referred to above are applied at all times, and
- Ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the safety of persons on the premises in the event of an outbreak of fire whether such outbreak has occurred or not.

Scope of the Guidance

This guidance address fire safety in Gaeltacht Households used to accommodate Foghlaimeoirí Gaeilge. The fire safety recommendations identified in this guidance should be applied throughout the household i.e. the Foghlaimeoirí Gaeilge accommodation and the accommodation being used by the Bean an Tí and her family. It makes recommendations on building layout, fire protection facilities, fire safety management and other measures to minimise the danger to life from fire and should only be used in relation to single or two storey premises. Premises with three or more stories should be dealt with by the Local Authority on a case-by-case basis.

Chapter 2 - Fire Safety Guidance

The recommended minimum fire safety standard for Gaeltacht households accommodating Foghlaimeoirí Gaeilge should typically include:

1. An LD1 Grade D fire detection and alarm system designed in accordance with BS 5839 Part 6: 2004¹. This system should incorporate suitably located and interconnected mains powered heat detector (located in the kitchen) and optical smoke detectors (with standby rechargeable power supply and an element of central control) throughout the remainder of the premises, including all circulation areas that form part of the escape route and in all rooms and areas in which a fire might start, other than toilets, bathrooms and shower rooms. The central control facility should be located in the main entrance hall and should provide the following features;
 - Manual call point for test and evacuation signalling,
 - Locator switch for locating the alarm source, and
 - Each alarm should have a means of identifying that the circuit is live and working.
2. Doors on escape routes, in particular the front and rear final exit doors, should only be fitted with simple fastenings that can be readily operated from the inside without the use of a key.
3. Escape/rescue windows need only be provided from bedrooms². They should provide an unobstructed clear open area of at least 0.33m² with a minimum width or height of 450mm. The bottom of the window opening of 1st floor windows should be not more than 1100mm and not less than 800mm above the floor immediately inside or beneath the window. The bottom of the window opening of ground floor windows should be not more than 1100mm and may be less than 800mm above the floor immediately inside or beneath the window.

¹ Code of practice for the design, installation and maintenance of fire detection and fire alarm systems in dwellings.

² For the purpose of this guidance a bedroom shall include any room used by the Bean an Tí for temporary sleeping accommodation i.e. living room, study, etc.

4. Bedrooms should not be inner rooms³. Doors from bedrooms should lead directly into a corridor, hall or staircase. En-suite bathrooms, showers or small storage rooms are acceptable inner rooms. Where a bedroom is an inner room it should be provided with a direct exit to outside by way of a door, an escape window is not acceptable in this situation. Where the inner room is not used for sleeping accommodation an escape window leading directly to outside is acceptable.
5. Emergency lighting should be provided to illuminate the main circulation area when normal lighting fails. A facility for testing the emergency lighting system should be provided.
6. A stairs serving an upper storey should be enclosed with storey-height construction (which need not be fire resisting) and should discharge directly to the open air at ground/access level. Any open plan arrangement where the stairway rises directly from the ground storey living accommodation would need specific consideration and is not recommended.
7. Wall and ceiling linings in escape routes should have a Class B rating as defined in Technical Guidance Document B to the Building Regulations, 2006, while all other areas should have a rating not less than Class C. Any non-combustible material, such as plaster, brickwork, blockwork or plasterboard has a Class B performance rating. Combustible materials such as timber sheeting and other light board materials will not meet either Class B or Class C performance.
8. The storage of combustible materials in halls under a stairs should be avoided.
9. Portable heating devices should not be used.
10. First aid fire fighting equipment should be provided in the kitchen. This should include at least 1No. 6kg dry powder fire extinguisher and a fire blanket.

³ Inner room – a room from which escape is possible only by passing through an access or outer room.

11. A fire drill should be carried out on the first night all Foghlaimoirí Gaeilge spend in their new household. The Bean an Tí should test the fire detection and alarm system on the same night. This procedure should be repeated on the first night of each course i.e. over the nine-week season three fire drills should be carried out, one per course.
12. Durable fire safety instruction notices indicating the actions to be taken 'On Discovering a Fire' and 'On Hearing the Fire Alarm' should be fixed to the inside of the doors to all bedrooms, in both languages. (See Appendix 1 for a sample notice)
13. Escape routes both internally (corridors, landings, stairs and halls) and externally, to be unobstructed and available for use at all times.
14. The fire detection and alarm system, the emergency lighting system and any fire fighting equipment should be thoroughly examined by a competent person once a year immediately prior to the college season. A record of these tests should be kept by the Bean an Tí in a fire safety register (see Appendix 2)
15. Furnishings should comply with S.I. No. 316/1995: Industrial Research and Standards (Fire Safety) (Domestic Furniture) Order, 1995.
16. The Bean an Tí should keep a fire safety register. Details of the type of information that should be kept in it can be found in Appendix 2.

Appendix 1. Emergency and Evacuation Procedures

Fire Instruction Notices

A fire instruction notice is a printed list of instructions indicating the actions to be taken when a fire or other emergency occurs. The notice is divided into two parts depending on whether a person discovers a fire or hears a warning of fire. A sample notice is shown below.

FIRE INSTRUCTION NOTICE

On Discovering A Fire

- Activate the nearest break glass unit⁴ if there is one available.
- Inform the Bean an Tí of the location of the fire.
- Leave the premises immediately using the nearest available exit.
- Do not rush.
- Designated person to contact the Emergency Services (999 or 112).⁵
- Do not re-enter the premises.
- Obey the instructions of the Bean an Tí.

On Hearing An Alarm or Other Warning

- Leave the premises immediately using the nearest available exit.
- Do not rush.
- Designated person to contact the Emergency Services (999 or 112).⁵
- Do not re-enter the premises.
- Obey the instructions of the Bean an Tí.

Layout Drawings

Accompanying this notice there should be a plan identifying the route occupants of the room should take to safety, in the event of an emergency. Both the fire instruction notice and the plan should be printed on durable material and be fixed to the back of all bedroom doors.

⁴ Where there is no break glass unit or the fire alarm system has not yet activated, staff and occupants should be warned verbally.

⁵ Information given to the Emergency Services by phone should include, your name, phone number, address (giving landmarks if necessary), the nature of the fire and any other relevant information.

Appendix 2. Fire Safety Register

This appendix provides guidance to the type of records and other information that should be included in a fire safety register. The format of the register is not prescribed, but the forms in the following pages could be used to this purpose. These forms and associated documentation could be held in a loose-leaf folder or other filing system and kept in a secure location.

The Fire Safety Register should include at least the following information:

- (a) Premises details
- (b) Bean an Tí weekly checks
- (c) Annual checks
- (d) Fire alarm certificate
- (e) Emergency lighting certificate

(a) Premises Details

Name of Premises _____

Name of Person in Charge _____

Telephone Number of Premises _____

Address of Premises

Name of Person responsible for calling the Fire Brigade

Number of Bedrooms _____

Number of Bed Spaces _____

Names of Foghlaimeoirí Gaeilge

Etc.

(b) Bean an Tí Weekly Checks

(i) Evacuation/Fire Drill Record

All Foghlaimeoirí Gaeilge should be involved in at least one fire drill in the premises in which they are resident. This should take place on the first night they all spend on the premises. The evacuation/fire drill should be recorded in the table below.

	Date of Drill	Time of Drill	Did all Foghlaimeoirí Gaeilge participate (Y/N)	Comments
Drill 1				
Drill 2				
Drill 3				

(ii) Weekly Fire Alarm Test

	Date	Time	Alarm Activated (Y/N)	Faults Noted (Y/N)	Signed
Week 1					
Week 2					
Week 3					
Week 4					
Week 5					
Week 6					
Week 7					
Week 8					
Week 9					

(iii) Weekly Emergency Lighting Test

	Date	Time	Lighting Activated (Y/N)	Faults Noted (Y/N)	Signed
Week 1					
Week 2					
Week 3					
Week 4					
Week 5					
Week 6					
Week 7					
Week 8					
Week 9					

(c) Annual Checks

(to be completed by a competent person)

(i) Annual Fire-Fighting Equipment Test

Type and Size	Location	Details of Faults and Action taken	Date and Signature

(ii) Annual Fire Detection and Alarm System Test

Date	Time	Event	Action required or taken	Completion Date	Initials

(iii) Annual Emergency Lighting Test

Date	Time	Event	Action required or taken	Completion Date	Initials

(d) Fire Alarm Certificate
(to be completed by a competent person)

A fire alarm system is required in every premises used to accommodate Foghlaimeoirí Gaeilge to provide early warning of an outbreak of fire and to ensure that the escape routes can be safely used.

Installation Record

Number of Smoke Detectors _____

Number of Heat Detectors _____

Number of Break Glass Units
(if applicable) _____

This system is operational and has been checked and tested in accordance with BS 5839: Part 1: 2002.

Signed _____

Status _____

Date _____

For and on behalf of _____
Service Organisation

Note:
Original commissioning certificate should be attached if available.

(e) Emergency Lighting Certificate

(to be completed by a competent person)

An emergency lighting system should be provided to illuminate the escape routes on failure of the mains electrical supply.

Installation Record

Number of Emergency Lights _____

Date of Inspection/Installation _____

Inspected/Installed by _____

Signed _____

Status _____

Date _____

For and on behalf of _____

Service Organisation

Note:

Original commissioning certificate should be attached if available.