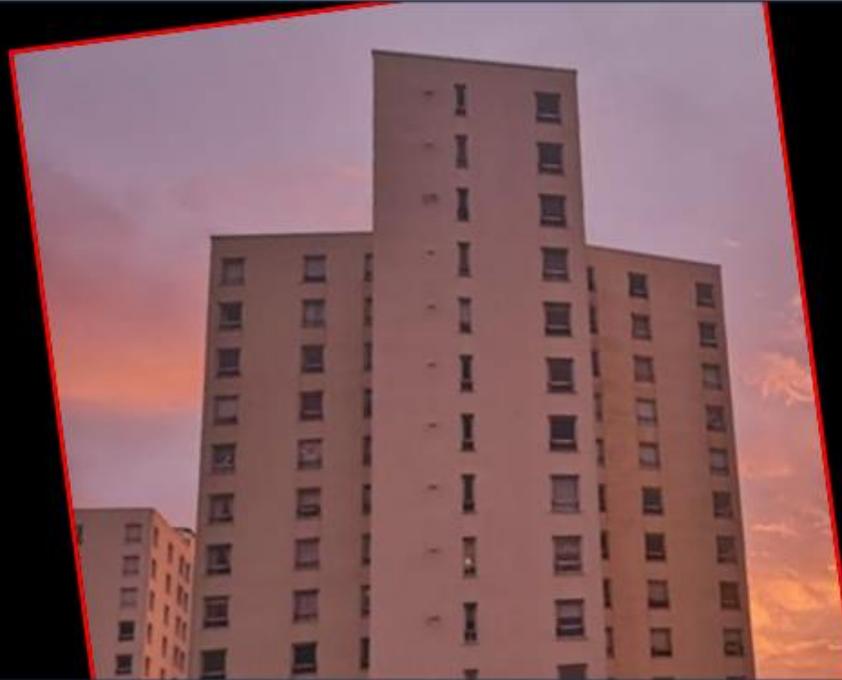




**Jersey Fire & Rescue**

*..making Jersey a safer community*



Site Risk Questionnaire – A Guidance Booklet for Managing Agencies of Tall and/or Complex Buildings

### **Introduction**

This guidance provides an overview and a brief explanation to each question of the gathering information form (Site Risk Questionnaire) for all tall and/or complex buildings.

It enables Managing Agents (MA) and the States of Jersey Fire and Rescue Service (SJFRS) to identify areas of risk for each individually inspected premises in a systematic and consistent manner.

This approach will also allow for:

- The gathering of information for existing and future databases;
- The making of a rapid assessment of the existing fire safety and firefighting provisions;
- A consistent and verifiable process of determining enforcement action;
- The implementation of actions to protect the environment and surrounding areas.

### **Definitions**

The definition of a 'tall building' can be divided into two categories:

A medium-rise building:

*Is a building containing two or more sets of domestic premises that –*

- a) Is at least 11 metres above ground level; and/or*
- b) Has at least five storeys (ground plus four floors).*

A high-rise building:

*Means a building containing two or more sets of domestic premises that –*

- a) Is at least 18 metres above ground level; and/or*
- b) Has at least seven storeys (ground plus six floors).*

The definition of a 'responsible person' (as defined in the Fire Precautions (Jersey) Law 1977) can be defined as:

- a) In relation to a workplace, the employer, if the workplace is to any extent under his or her control:*
- b) In relation to any premises not being a workplace under the control of the employer-*
  - i) The person who has control of the premises (as occupier or otherwise), or*
  - ii) The owner, where no other person has control of the premises (as occupier or otherwise).*

### **Inspection Process**

The inspection process is an activity which will gather premises information to recognise any specific hazards and/or risks and to observe, and improve if required, the general fire safety standards for each tall building.

This will be achieved by each individual building being allocated a single Site Risk Questionnaire (SRQ). The electronic questionnaire will be split into two parts;

(Part A) SRQ-Ops will be completed by the SJFRS; and

(Part B) SRQ-MA will be completed by the Managing Agency.

Once each section has been completed, the information will be collated and combined to provide a single finished document. This document will be known as a Site Risk Information (SRI) document.

The process will consist of:

- An electronic SRQ to be issued to both the MA and the SJFRS for each building that falls within the 'tall building' category.
- The SJFRS will contact the MA (or responsible person) to agree a convenient time and date for their visit. This will allow the MA to inform all residents of the building prior to the agreed date.
- The SJFRS will then attend the premises to undertake and complete their part of the SRQ.
- Concurrently, the Managing Agencies will answer their SRQ, and this will be submitted automatically to the Fire Safety Department upon completion.
- Information from both sections (SJFRS and MA) will be collated and the two electronic documents will be combined to create a single Site Risk Information document for the allocated premises.

### **Guidance Notes**

The following guidance notes are intended to assist the Managing Agency (and/or the responsible person) of the building in the completion of their SRQ.

For the purpose of these guidance notes and ease of explanation, the questions have been assigned to the following categories based around the structure of the SRQ:

1. Premises Information;
2. Premises Contact Details;
3. Construction of Premises;
4. Occupancy;
5. Fire Safety;
6. Firefighting Facilities;
7. Notable Risks.

#### **1. Premises Information**

The following questions will require answering:

- The full name of the premises;
- The full address of the premises, including the post code;
- The location of the main entrance;

- Directions to an alternative entrance (in case the main entrance is inaccessible);
- Any access codes to the premises. How would the SJFRS enter the building after hours?
- Does the building have a key safe? If so, where is it and what is the access code?

## 2. Premises Contact Details

We would like to have contact details of the responsible person who we could ask to attend, and/or provide relevant information of the building in the event of an emergency. This could be a generic role or post within your organisation, for example, 'Head of Estates' or the number of the duty manager.

Details such as:

- The name of the person;
- Their position in your organisation;
- Their contact numbers (mobile number at least);
- Their email address.

## 3. Construction of Premises

The details we would like to know are:

- The year of construction
- What the building is constructed of. This is an important section of the questionnaire as we want to know how the building has been constructed. By having this information will allow us to know how the materials will react when subjected to fire and intense heat.

This section will be divided into six areas. They are:

- The primary construction. This will be a tick box question which allows you to choose from a number of choices. It also gives you an opportunity to tick 'other' if the option hasn't been listed.
- Roof construction. Another tick box question with one of the options being asbestos. If you have asbestos within the building then please inform us. You should also have an asbestos register readily available. Please let us know if you do.
- Floor construction. Please tick the relevant box.
- External cladding/facades. Following on from Grenfell and its enquiry, this is obviously a very important and appropriate question to answer so we've given you several options to choose from.
- Internal construction and linings. Please tick the appropriate box.

### Important note:

Reinforced Autoclave Aerated Concrete (RAAC) is mentioned in a number of areas.

RAAC has been predominantly used in roofs, walls and floors from the mid 50's to 1980.

Where used, RAAC may provide a risk of sudden full or partial structural collapse due to instability of the material. Although research into how this material would behave involved in fire is limited, it is thought that thermal radiation may cause it to collapse.

Therefore, if it has been identified in the construction of your premises please let the SJFRS know.

- Internal features. We want to know if there are any different or unusual features within the building. This is to pre-warn firefighting teams of any dangers when searching risk areas where the visibility is low.

Options include;

- Duplex flats
- Galleries
- Mezzanine floors
- Open plan layouts

#### **4. Occupancy**

In this category we would like to know the approximate number of residents. This will assist the SJFRS with their evacuation strategy should they need to evacuate the building.

We understand that this will be difficult to calculate as the number will change throughout a 24-hour period. However, any assistance in this area would be greatly appreciated.

We would also like to know if there are any vulnerable individuals within your property. This will include residents who have;

- Restricted mobility;
- Limited comprehension;
- If they depend on any oxygen therapy;
- Any other disability that you may know of.

#### **5. Firefighting Facilities**

This section focuses on:

- Sprinklers – have they been installed? If so, what is the coverage within the building and the location(s) of the stop valves.

The SJFRS will want to know this information to ensure:

- minimum amount of water damage to the building when carrying out firefighting activities;
- that they are fully aware of the which areas are covered, and more importantly, which areas are not.

- Dry risers – have they been fitted? Where is the inlet and which floors do they serve?

The latter will give you several options to answer as sometimes the dry riser outlet serves either the odd or even floors only, and sometimes both.

- The type of lifts installed. During an incident the Fire Service will want to take control of the lift to assist in transferring resources to the floor of concern.

There are a number of types available, and each will respond differently when operated. Please contact your competent lift engineer who will be able to advise on this.

- Firefighting Shafts – A protected enclosure containing a firefighting stair, firefighting lobbies, a fire main (dry riser) and, if provided, a firefighters lift. The fire protected enclosure contains either a:

- Firefighting stair; protected stairway connecting with an accommodation area only through a firefighting lobby
- Firefighting lobby area, and, if provided; protected lobby provided within a firefighting shaft giving access from a firefighting stair to an accommodation area, and normally to any associated firefighters list and fire main (dry riser)
- A firefighting lift.

We would like to know how many firefighting shafts the building has, and their locations

## 6. Fire Safety

Information received from your questionnaire will provide our attending crews with knowledge of the buildings in-house fire safety provisions prior to their arrival.

This will assist the Officer in Charge in:

- Locating the initial area of risk;
- Making a rapid assessment of the incident;
- Assisting in the extraction of smoke to provide a safer environment for the residents and firefighters;
- Assisting in the rapid evacuation of the building should the incident escalate.

The information will also decide his/her initial actions to deal with the incident and ultimately safe valuable time in saving lives and protecting the property.

Questions will be based around the installation, location, and coverage of the following safety features:

- Automatic fire detection systems – the location of the panel and the coverage of the fire alarm system;
- Smoke control systems – location of the indicator panel or manual control point (MCP), the coverage of the system within the premises, and what type of system is installed. This is vital information as the firefighting crews can use this provision to help assist in dealing with any incidents;
- The fire resistance of the fire doors to each individual flat – this is either 30-, 60- or 120-minutes fire resistance;
- Fire safety refuge areas; an area where occupants with limited mobility can shelter temporarily in an area of relative safety;
- On-site communication systems – some premises may have the facility to be able to communicate with the residents. This would help the SJFRS in the safe evacuation of the building. Options include:
  - A PA system;
  - An evacuation alert system;
  - A link to any fire safety refuge areas.
- An evacuation strategy;
- Whether or not there are any evacuation rendezvous points for the residents in the event that an evacuation is required.

### Notable Risks

We would like the MA's to use this section to identify risks within their tall and/or complex buildings.

The questionnaire will provide a multiple choice of potential risks (and their locations) to the SJFRS that include:

- Balconies – most ‘tall buildings’ will have balconies which provide no risk at all. However, some balconies have turned into an extension to a resident flat, meaning a high fire-loading which could assist in the fire spreading from one floor to another.
- Storage of lithium ion/hydrogen batteries - damaged or unstable batteries and improper charging and/or storage can cause them to overheat. This can lead to an explosive and aggressive fire that spreads rapidly and is very difficult to extinguish. These types of batteries are associated with electric vehicles.

Because of this, we would like to know of their location(s) if they are being used or stored within any of your buildings.

- Heat pumps – refrigerants in air source heat pump systems may be combustible. Commercial systems contain sufficient quantities that, if released, can pose a significant fire hazard. The insulation for the piping systems may also be combustible which would increase the overall fire load.
- Biomass boilers – biomass is an inherently dangerous material possessing significant fire and explosion hazards. Please let us know if your building has one installed.
- Photovoltaic panels - the panels themselves are completely harmless, but the danger is the high voltage in the batteries or capacitors within the system.

An additional risk is the overall weight of the panels mounting brackets which will be a considerable weight to structure that may already be weakened due to the effects of a fire situation.

- Electric charging facilities – fires involving electric vehicles come with associated risk including an aggressive and dangerous fire which provides additional challenges to the SJFRS. It is therefore crucial that we know any areas that have a number of these vehicles parked in one area.
- Uninterruptible power supplies (UPS) – UPS batteries may contain materials that are harmful and has an explosive risk when subjected to a fire situation.