

Proposed changes to BS9991

Hope is not a strategy: Investing in residential accommodation under BS 9991:[2022]

Background

A significant revision to “BS 9991: the code of practice for fire safety in the design, management and use of residential buildings” is anticipated to be implemented 2022 and not too many people want to tell investors about it.

Why not?

Well, maybe it’s because when you, as an investor or owner, are aware of the content and proposed changes, then you may question how your investment in new build real estate and ongoing operational estate is being deployed and whether designers, constructors and developers are just “kicking the can down the road” for you to pick up again under the imminent arrival of the Building Safety Act.

Aim of this paper

This is the first significant revision of this crucial standard of fire safety compliance since 2015, and the first since the catastrophe at Grenfell.

This paper aims to inform our clients as to:

- Summary of proposed key design changes
- Summary of proposed key operational changes

Design changes

So, what are the significant changes proposed and why should you as an investor or owner be concerned?

We list a few of the key design changes below that could apply to residential developments from the introduction of BS 9991:[2022].

Building Element	Proposed Requirement	Building Height			
		<11m	>11m	>18m	>30m
Evacuation Lift	There will need to be at least one evacuation lift per fire core. In fact, two are preferred such that one is always available during periods of maintenance. All those developments that don’t have evacuation lifts will need to enhance an existing passenger lift to comply. You will still need to provide a fire lift per fire core of the building	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	Two evacuation lifts in each fire core will be required			<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Secondary Power	There will need to be a secondary power source to the building: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Standby generator;• Uninterruptible Power Source (UPS); or• A second independent sub-station feed. Two feeds from the same sub-station will no longer comply. About time too – that was always a fudge!	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sprinklers	A modified residential sprinkler system covering up to 100m ² of ancillary space will be compliant. Above 100m ² and you’ll need to introduce to a separate commercial system for those areas – that means more tanks and pumps	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Design changes (continued)

Building Element	Proposed Requirement	Building Height			
		<11m	>11m	>18m	>30m
Sprinklers	All areas of the development, including apartments, corridors and stairways will need to be sprinklered		○	○	○
Emergency Evacuation Alert System	A system compliant to BS 8629: 2019 is to be provided. Note: that the current drafting of BS 8629 requires a completely independent alert system to be wired to every apartment. So that pretty much doubles your fire alarm costs. But is, in our opinion, money well spent and about time we followed Scotland's lead!			○	○
Alternative Escape Routes	Every resident must be provided with access to two separate escape stairwells. However, if this is not possible then the single stairwell development will need all of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The structure must not be made from structural timber. • The escape stairwell must be at least 1.2m wide. • The escape stairwell must be provided with a positive pressure system. • Fire resilience of the escape stairwell will be at least 90 minutes. • Fire lobby between the escape stairwell and any corridor serving apartments. • If corridors lengths exceed 7.5m mechanical smoke extraction is required to corridors. 		○	○	○
Smoke Ventilation	Natural smoke ventilation in buildings taller than 30m is no longer compliant.				○
Open Plan Apartments	Minimum width sterile escape route through apartment to main exit door is 0.9m	○	○	○	○
	Minimum separation of a cooker hob to the sterile escape route through apartment to main exit door is 1.8m	○	○	○	○

However, the above list should have prospective 'Clients' and 'Accountable Persons' under the imminent 'Building Safety Act' asking some seriously intrusive questions of your design teams prior to accepting completion of developments that are unlikely to comply with the above.

There you have it! But please read the detail as there is so much more within the finer detail of the proposed draft.

Conclusion

HAALO considers all of these proposals for the development and operation of assets a practical and sensible approach to protecting the residents that will call your properties "home". Then again, you could stick your head in the sand and hope that this will all go away. Just remember, though:

"Hope is not a strategy!"

Please note that the current proposals are currently in draft and subject to change.



Lead construction advisory services

HAALO Ltd possess the skills, expertise and experience in both construction and operational management disciplines to independently advise those persons that will be 'Accountable Persons' under the proposed building safety act.

Simplifying the complex

HAALO specialises in the stress-testing of large infrastructure propositions to help you target investment opportunities and optimise impact. Through assertive management of the due diligence and delivery processes we enhance the beneficial social and environmental impacts of your investment strategy.

We identify and mitigate risks to help you secure informed and appropriate investment for your long-term goals.

We work with our clients to create a bespoke service, collaborating with your in-house teams to build great deals with integrity, honesty, reliability and sustainability.

At HAALO, we have a unique, single-minded focus on building to operate and operating safely and efficiently that ensures your projects are manageable and profitable, in both the immediate and long-term future.

The HAALO team



Peter Bowe

Peter has over 30 years' experience delivering high value infrastructure projects and services in the UK, Europe and the Middle East. Over his career, Peter has predominantly worked in securing and delivering high value PFI/PPP partnership transactions in the Private Rental, Education, Healthcare, Central Government and Defence sectors. Peter has personally delivered programmes exceeding £3.5bn in contract values ranging from £50m to £500m.

peter.bowe@haalo.co.uk



Ben Sedgewick

With over 20 years of practical experience in delivering technical and commercial project management solutions on PPP, Infrastructure and development transactions, Ben has a deep understanding of managing risk and applying control tools to successfully execute project strategies. Ben has delivered bid, transaction management, construction implementation and asset management functions on structured finance transactions across residential, hospitality and commercial sectors.

ben.sedgewick@haalo.co.uk





020 3875 8037
team@haalo.co.uk
🐦 @HAALO_Ltd
🌐 HAALO Ltd

HAALO Ltd
Kemp House
152-160 City Road
London
EC1V 2NX