|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | The Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service crest with the words "Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service" beneath. |
| Our Reference High Rise/Letters/FSA MHCLG Release180719Contact:- highrise@manchesterfire.gov.uk |  |
| All Greater Manchester Housing Providers & Managing AgentsDate 19th July 2019 | **Chief Fire Officer**: Jim WallaceGreater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service146 Bolton RoadSwintonManchester M27 8USTelephone 0161 736 5866www.manchesterfire.gov.uk |

 Dear Sir or Madam,

**\*\*Fire Safety Alert: New MHCLG Information released\*\***

I am writing to draw your attention to information that was released by the Ministry of Housing Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) on the 18th July which affects high rise residential buildings. The information released is extensive and can be found on the MHCLG Building Safety Programme pages of the website <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/building-safety-programme>.

In particular I want to draw your attention to some key information that relates to the fire safety of high rise residential buildings.

New Advice Note: High Pressure Laminate (HPL) Systems

A new advice note ‘Advice Note 22 - Use of HPL Panels in external wall systems’ has been published and a copy is enclosed for your information.

As you will no doubt be aware the Government has been arranging tests of other forms of cladding systems and has tested a fire retardant High Pressure Laminate panel with stonewool insulation. This combination of product met the relevant performance criteria. However, the Government’s Expert Advice Panel have concluded that whilst this combination can meet the relevant performance criteria where any type of HPL panel is combined with combustible insulation it is likely to pose a risk and that HPL panels with a classification of C or D under the European Classification system are unlikely to resist the spread of fire.

If you own or are responsible for the management of a high rise residential building which has an external wall system comprising of HPL and have not already made an assessment of the external wall system and reviewed and updated the fire risk assessment you should make arrangements to do so as a matter of urgency.

Professional advice may be provided by an appropriately qualified and competent professional, (i.e. a fire engineer or construction professional with significant knowledge and experience of fire safety). Further guidance on how to find professional advisors can be found by visiting <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/information-note-for-landlords-and-building-owners-of-tall-residential-buildings-with-acm-cladding>

Testing of Timber Fire Doors

MHCLG has concluded its testing of timber fire doors which involved testing 25 different doors. All of the fire doors tested passed the 30-minute standard on both sides of the door and MHCLG has published a full table of results.

The Expert Panel has therefore concluded that timber fire doors perform consistently in fire resistance when tested and pass the 30-minute required standard across the market when manufactured to specification.

Please note that this testing was undertaken in relation to solid timber doors and the earlier advice from MHCLG in relation to composite fire doors should also be considered.

The effectiveness of any fire door is dependent on an adequate system of maintenance and this is a requirement under Article 17 of the Fire Safety Order. I would ask that you take steps to satisfy yourselves that you have adequate systems in place to identify any problems and take action where required.

ACM Remediation Funding

Following the earlier announcement of a £200million fund for remediation of ACM cladding in privately owned buildings MHCLG has released the prospectus with details on the criteria for applying for funding. If you own or manage a building which has Category 2 or 3 ACM and have not yet received a copy of the prospectus directly from MHCLG you may wish to access this on line as a matter of urgency.

GM High Rise Task Force Resident Survey

I would also like to take this opportunity to ask for your assistance in promoting the ‘High Rise Resident Survey’ which has been launched as part of the work of the GM High Rise Task Force.

As you are aware the High Rise Task Force was set up following the fire at Grenfell Tower, to ensure every residential high rise tower block is safe from fire and all residents receive the appropriate fire safety advice. The task force brings together all ten local authorities, Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service, landlords of tower blocks across the city-region in both private and public ownership, as well as representatives from Universities, Utility Companies and other specialist teams.

The survey has been launched to help inform the future work of the task force and some elements will also assist in responding to the Government’s Building a Safer Future consultation.

The responses received will help the taskforce gain a better understanding of the issues and concerns residents have, including how safe they feel and how they have been impacted by the fire at Grenfell.

I would like to ask for your support encouraging high rise residents in buildings you own or manage to share their experiences, thoughts, opinions and concerns through the survey.

I have enclosed a poster which you are welcome to use to promote the survey to your residents. The survey is currently open until July 28, 2019 (but may be extended) and can be found at [www.gmconsult.org](http://www.gmconsult.org)

I hope that this information is useful if you have queries that you consider GMFRS can assist with please email highrise@manchesterfire.gov.uk

Yours faithfully,



Tony Hunter

Assistant County Fire Officer & Director of Protection

Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service

Enc: MHCLG Building Safety Programme:

Advice Note 22 ‘Use of HPL Panels in external wall systems’