

## **Building Regulations**

### **Approved Document Part B Fire Safety - Overview**

**Summary:** Approved Document B of the UK Building Regulations looks at fire safety in domestic houses and also non-domestic structures. The document itself is split into two parts - Volume One for domestic buildings and Volume Two for non-domestic, due to the amount of items that need to be covered. The main aim of each document is to set out the rules and guidelines that need to be followed in order to prevent the spread of fire over internal linings such as walls and ceilings and also on the external areas of a domestic building. It also states what materials can be used and what BS standards each should conform to, to ensure that they provide the required levels of protection. They are often referred to as simply Building Regs Part B.

Part B of the building regulations in England that covers fire safety matters within and around buildings. The approved documents to Part B are in two volumes:

- Approved Document B (fire safety) volume 1: dwellinghouses.
- Approved Document B (fire safety) volume 2: buildings other than dwellinghouses.

**For the purposes of definition, a dwelling house is a residential building shared by 6 people or less. The term dwelling house does not include flats or buildings containing a flat.**

The most recent editions were published in January 2013 and came into effect in April 2013.

Approved Document B is by far the largest of all the approved documents, mainly due to the volume of information and guidelines that need to be covered. Because of this the document itself is broken into two separate documents - the first (volume 1) dealing with fire safety in dwellings and the second (volume 2) deals with buildings that are not dwellings.

Fire safety is of paramount importance in all properties and Document B exists to ensure that adequate warning signals exist to indicate a fire if it breaks out and also that any building is constructed in such a way that both internal and external fire spread is limited and that the fire service has suitable access and space in order to control the fire.

### **Review of Building Regs**

The review will look at the current building regulations and fire safety with a focus on high-rise residential buildings, including:

- The regulatory system around design, construction and on-going management in relation to fire safety.
- Compliance and enforcement issues.
- International regulation and experience in this area.

## **Building Regulations Approved Document B**



<b>B1</b>	<b>Means of warning and escape</b>
<b>B2</b>	<b>Internal fire spread (linings)</b>
<b>B3</b>	<b>Internal fire spread (structure)</b>
<b>B4</b>	<b>External fire spread</b>
<b>B5</b>	<b>Access and facilities for the fire service</b>

Approved Document B of the UK Building Regulations

Document B is by far the largest of all the approved documents and when you consider what it covers, namely fire safety, you can understand why.

Unfortunately, fires do happen in both domestic and non-domestic buildings and when they do, the top priority is ensuring that anyone in them can get out quickly, easily and safely and this is the purpose of this document.

Due to the many areas that need to be covered for domestic properties (e.g. houses, flats etc....) and non-domestic buildings (e.g. offices, factories, warehouses etc....) Document B is broken down into two documents:

- Approved Document B Volume 1 Domestic Properties
- Approved Document B Volume 2 Non-Domestic Properties

Both volumes cover essentially the same items, but obviously for two different scenarios such as means of fire warning and escape, internal fire spread for both the building's lining and its structure, the external spread of fire and also the access that is required by the fire services.

As a summary, Approved Document B (volumes one and two) cover:

As we have mentioned, volume 1 is in place to deal with fire safety within a dwelling or habitable property. It is broken down into the following five sections:

- **B1 - Means of warning and escape:** Suitable means of warning should exist to notify inhabitants of the presence of a fire and then allow them to vacate the dwelling easily and safely
- **B2 - Internal fire spread (linings):** The lining materials used within the construction of the property should exhibit the required fire resistant properties
- **B3 - Internal fire spread (structure):** The construction materials used in the structure of the building should feature the required fire resistant properties

- **B4 - External fire spread:** In the event of a fire its external spread should be limited
- **B5 - Access and facilities for fire services:** Stated access routes and facilities should be provided for fire service personnel and equipment

### Approved Document B Volume 2 - Fire Safety in Buildings other than Dwellings

If you have viewed Approved Document B, Volume 1 then you will be familiar with the theme set by building regulations.

## Fire safety

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**APPROVED DOCUMENT**

**B**

**VOLUME 2 – BUILDINGS OTHER THAN DWELLINGHOUSES**

**B1 Means of warning and escape**  
**B2 Internal fire spread (linings)**  
**B3 Internal fire spread (structure)**  
**B4 External fire spread**  
**B5 Access and facilities for the fire service**

Building Regulations Approved Document B Volume 2 –

Unlike Volume 1 above, this section, Building Regulations Approved Document B Volume 2, deals with fire safety in properties that are not classed as dwellings.

As with Volume 1, Volume 2 also covers the following five topics:

- B1 - Means of fire and smoke warning and escape
- B2 - Internal spread of fire within a building in respect to linings
- B3 - Internal spread of fire within a building in respect to the structure
- B4 - External spread of fire
- B5 - Fire service access for personnel and equipment

Due to the extent of differing types of properties (that are not houses or dwellings) and the many differing construction techniques that can be used outside of the more common methods used when building houses, volume 2 is quite vast as it needs to cover rules for each different building type and construction technique.

In essence, Volume 2 itself does cover the same points as Volume 1, but as said, it a much wider sense.

Items and buildings covered in this document include:

- Flats
- Buildings other than flats
- Common and joint-use stairs
- Living and working units
- Care and residential homes
- Refuge provision for vertical escape
- Store rooms in shop premises
- Waste storage and refuse chutes
- Raised storage
- Conversion of buildings to flats
- Large and extensive cavities
- Pathways surrounding fire separating items
- Car parking
- Shopping complexes and Malls
- Location, number and provision of Fire mains
- Number and location of firefighting shafts
- Basement and underground car parks