IFC GROUP | INTERNATIONAL FIRE CONSULTANTS

# APPROVED DOCUMENT B SUMMARY OF 2019 REVISIONS

Following the tragedy of the Grenfell Tower fire in June 2017, the Government initiated a comprehensive review of the Building Regulations and Fire Safety by commissioning an independent reviewer, Dame Judith Hackitt, to determine the current failings and future solutions of the regulatory system.

*"The interim report identified that the current system of building regulations and fire safety is not fit for purpose and that a culture change is required to support the delivery of buildings that are safe. The system failure also identified in the interim report has allowed a culture of indifference to perpetuate".*
**GOV.UK, (2018).**

In light of this statement, the government has published numerous technical bulletins and instituted considerable changes to specifications in an attempt to improve fire safety in both high-rise and low-rise buildings, as exemplified by the 2018 amendments to the Building Regulations. Moreover, in this relatively short space of time, International Fire Consultants have witnessed that these changes have precipitated industry-wide repercussions, not only from a fire safety perspective but also contriving significant financial implications.

For example, by incorporating a ban on combustible materials in the external wall assembly of buildings over 18m in height, will in essence require clients to place greater investment on the materials they are required to choose. Modifications to requirements with a similar purpose to this have also been made in numerous other cogent publications. The new restrictions on combustible materials used in balcony construction is just one example. Again, these provisions would require further exploration, in order to fully appreciate the impact.

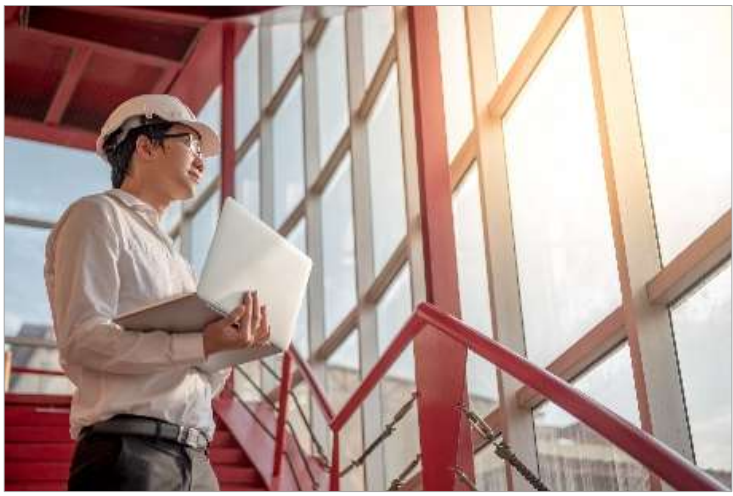
However it is evident that among these updated documents, Approved Document B (ADB) Fire Safety 2019 volumes 1 and 2 have been revised to bestow added clarity and to incorporate the recommended 2018 changes to the Building Regulations.

The recent publication of the newly clarified ADB edition is still provided in two volumes; however the content of each has been restructured in an attempt to be less ambiguous and therefore more clearly differentiate between building types and their applicable regulations.

- Volume 1: Dwellings
- Volume 2: Buildings other than dwellings

This newly reformatted Approved Document came into force on 30th August 2019. Further changes, to the technical content (rather than to the current modifications) will be subject to separate public consultation, although encouragingly for expedience, much of this has already taken place.

It is widely understood, that there are expected to be no changes to the technical guidance within ADB, however International Fire Consultants recognise that certain elements of the content have been updated in ways that do affect the technical specifications rather than just the presentation of the guidance.



These amendments have inevitably resulted in divergences between the newly updated documents and the more understood previous edition, making it difficult to identify any revisions to the guidance and how to effectively work with them. An inadequate understanding of these changes and their potential impact could certainly result in far-reaching and potentially disastrous consequences.

As a leading Fire Safety Engineering Consultancy, IFC have always been at the forefront of innovation and best practice for the industry. Our collective experience and wealth of knowledge has allowed us to largely anticipate these recent amendments to be able to continue to provide pertinent and effectual advice, clear insight and tailored fire safety solutions.

## SUMMARY OF CHANGES

| Old ADB - 2013 Amendments | New ADB 2019- Vol 1 | New ADB 2019- Vol 2 | Title |
|---|---|---|---|
| Table A1 (Vol 1) | Table B3 | Table B3 | Specific provisions of test for Fire resistance of elements of structure |
| Diagram 1 (Vol 1) | Diagram 2.1 | | Means of escape from Dwellinghouses |
| Diagram 2 (Vol 1) | Diagram 3.2 | | Flats - direct access |
| Diagram 3 (Vol 1) | Diagram 3.3 | | Flats - restricted access |
| Table 1 (Vol 1) | Table 4.1 | | Classification of wall linings |
| Diagram 24 (Vol 1) | Diagram 13.1 | | Turning facilities |
| Table 8 (Vol 1) | Table 13.1 | | Fire Service vehicle access route specification |
| Table 1 (Vol 2) | Table 3.1 | | Limitations on travel distances in common areas of block of flats |
| Diagram 4 (Vol 2) | Diagram 3.4 | | Flat with an alternative exit |
| Diagram 7 (Vol 2) | Diagram 3.7 | | Flats served by one common stair |
| Diagram 8 (Vol 2) | Diagram 3.8 | | Flats served by more than one common stair |
| Diagram 9 (Vol 2) | Diagram 3.9 | | Common escape route in small single stair building |
| Table C1 (Vol 2) | Table D1 | Table D1 | Floor space factors |
| Diagram C1 (Vol 2) | Diagram D1 | Diagram D1 | Measurement of door width |
| Diagram C4 (Vol 2) | Diagram D4 | Diagram D4 | Height of building |
| Diagram C6 (Vol 2) | Diagram D6 | Diagram D6 | Height of top storey in building |
| Table 2 (Vol 2) | | Table 2.1 | Limitations on travel distances |
| Table 3 (Vol 2) | | Table 2.2 | Minimum number of escape routes |
| Diagram 12 (Vol 2) | | Diagram 2.3 | Inner room and access room |
| Table 4 (Vol 2) | | Table 2.3 | Widths of escape routes and exits |
| Diagram 15 (Vol 2) | | Diagram 2.6 | Merging flow at final exit |
| Diagram 16 (Vol 2) | | Diagram 2.9 | Division of corridors |
| Table 6 (Vol 2) | | Table 3.1 | Minimum width of escape stairs |
| Table 7 (Vol 2) | | Table 3.2 | Capacity of stairs for basements simultaneous evacuation |

## SUMMARY OF CHANGES CONTINUED

| Old ADB - 2013 Amendments | New ADB 2019- Vol 1 | New ADB 2019- Vol 2 | Title |
|---|---|---|---|
| Table 10 (Vol 2) | | Table 6.1 | Classification of linings |
| Diagram 28 (Vol 2) | | Diagram 8.1 | Compartment floors |
| Para 9.2 (Vol 2) | Para 5.17 | Para 9.2 | Provision of cavity Barriers |
| Diagram 33 (Vol 2) | Diagram 8.1 | Diagram 9.1 | Provisions for cavity barriers |
| Diagram 34 (Vol 2) | Diagram 8.2 | Diagram 9.2 | Cavity walls excluded from provisions for cavity barriers |
| Table 12 (Vol 2) | | Table 8.1 | Maximum dimensions of building or compartmentation (non-residential) |
| Diagram 40 | Table 10.1 | Table 12.1 | Reaction to fire performance of external surface of walls |
| Table 19 (Vol 2) | | Table 15.1 | Fire Service vehicle access to buildings not fitted with fire mains |
| Table 20 (Vol 2) | | Table 15.2 | Fire Service vehicle access route specification |
| Diagram 50 (Vol 2) | | Diagram 15.3 | Turning facilities |
| Diagram 52 (Vol 2) | Diagram 15.1 | Diagram 17.1 | Components of a Firefighting shaft |
| Diagram 51 (Vol 2) | Diagram 15.2 | Diagram 17.2 | Provision of Firefighting shafts |
| NEW Diagram from 9991 (Vol1) | Diagram 15.3 | Diagram 17.3 | Location of firefighting shafts: hose laying distances |
| NEW Diagram from Table A2 | Table B4 | Table B4 | Minimum periods of fire resistance |
| Appendix B | Appendix C | Appendix C | Fire doorsets |
| Table B1 | Table C1 | Table C1 | Provisions for fire doorsets |
| Appendix C | Appendix D | Appendix D | Methods of measurement |
| Table D1 | Table 0.1 | Table 0.1 | Classification of purpose groups |
| New appendix | New appendix E | New appendix E | Sprinkler systems |