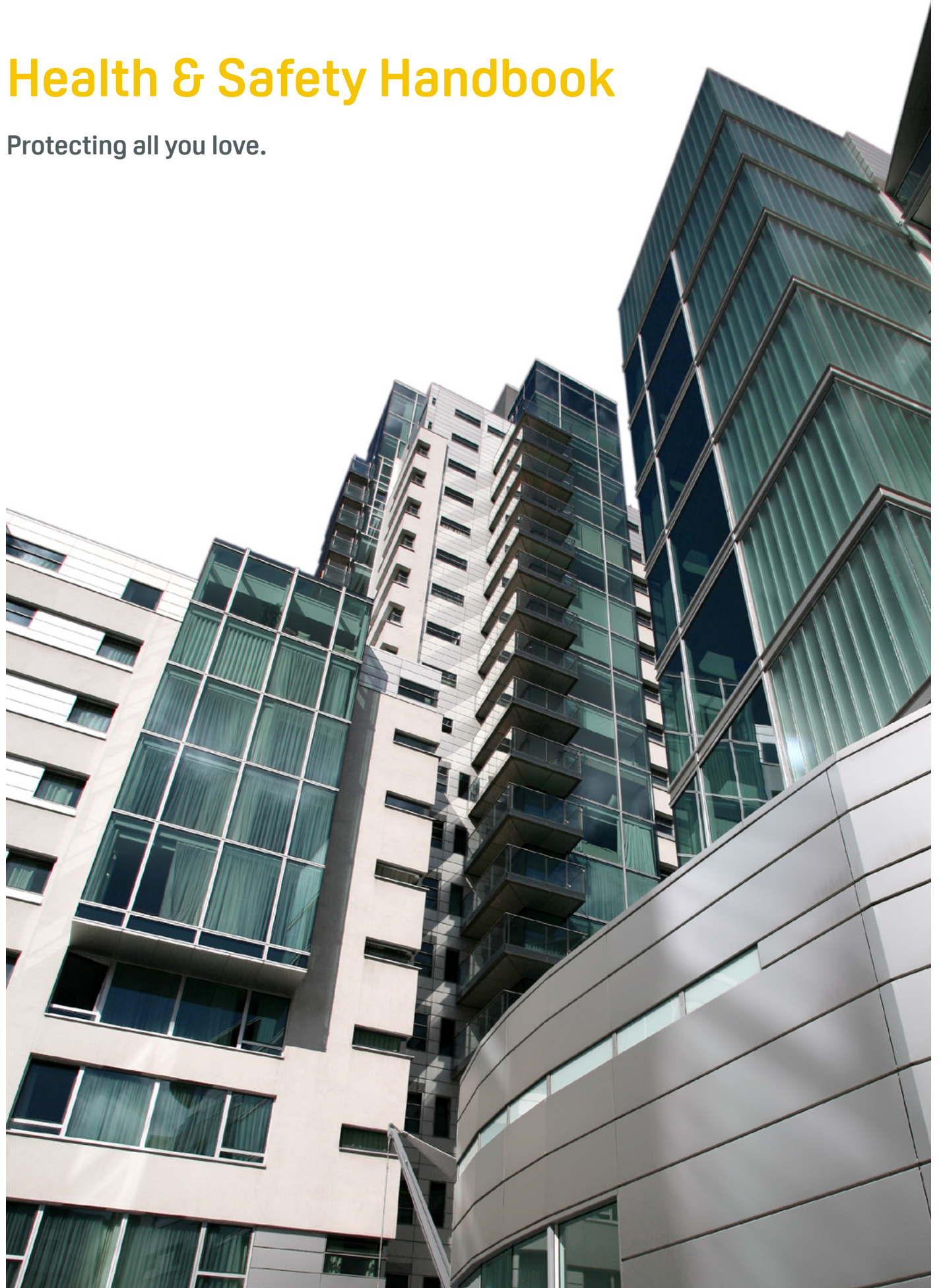


Health & Safety Handbook

Protecting all you love.



Introduction

A crucial part of property management is ensuring the safety of a development's residents, visitors and employees. FirstPort is committed to ensuring the highest possible standards of health and safety performance, offering the services of a dedicated and professional in-house team, which provides support and advice to customers, contractors and employees.





Health and Safety Risk Assessments

All blocks of flats (including managed estate areas) must have a Health and Safety Risk Assessment carried out on the communal areas. This is a legal requirement under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

The Courts and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) have determined that the Health and Safety Regulations apply to communal areas - so if a cleaner, gardener, managing agent or contractor enters them to do work, then a risk assessment must be undertaken.

Communal areas are not simply the internal parts of the building. They also include the roof, structure and other external areas. When carrying out a Health and Safety Risk Assessment, all areas including gardens, grounds, plant rooms, meter cupboards and lift motor rooms must be included.

FirstPort will arrange for a Health and Safety Risk Assessment to be carried out, on site, by a specialist at each development - carrying out any works required based on the result of the assessment.

Instructing and Managing Contractors

When it comes to instructing and managing contractors, there is a distinct set of legal requirements to consider, as set out in the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

- Section 3 of the act requires employers, and the self-employed to ensure that the way in which they carry out work does not endanger those who are not under their employment. Any contractor or self-employed person, instructed by FirstPort, is responsible for ensuring that they do not undertake work that is likely to harm anyone.
- FirstPort is responsible for vetting contractors and ensuring they have appropriate insurance(s), competence and experience to carry out the work allocated to them.
- The term ‘Contractor’ does not just refer to building contractors. It includes any individual or company who comes onto our property to fulfil a contractual obligation. ‘Contractors’ include: Telephone engineers, Window cleaners, Contract cleaners, Plumbers, Electrical/mechanical maintenance engineers, Grounds Maintenance/Gardeners.
- Unsafe working or accidents happen due to job planning failures and the lack of consideration regarding the Health and Safety aspects that could arise. Contractors working for FirstPort are required to complete a Health and Safety Risk Assessments of the work required and agree a safe method for doing the job.
- Contractors must have any relevant site-specific information needed to complete a Health and Safety Risk Assessment. This could include information about access for working at height - falling from height is one of the biggest risks contractors may face - or the location of asbestos for instance.

Certain types of work require attention because of the risks involved. These include:

- ‘Hot’ works such as those involving the use of naked flame, welding or working with bitumen boilers, electrical work or works at height e.g. window cleaning, redecoration and roof works.
- Construction work may be subject to the special conditions of the Construction Design and Management Regulations if the project is likely to last for more than 30 days with 20 or more workers working simultaneously or involves more than 500 person days.
- FirstPort will specify works to be carried out and in which areas the contractors can operate. There should be checks to understand whether Section 20 Consultation is needed before instruction of the work is given.
- Any contractors found to be putting themselves or others in danger on FirstPort developments because of unsafe working will be at risk from being removed from our approved contractors list.



Fire Safety



All blocks legally require a Fire Safety Risk Assessment under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. This applies to communal areas.

- FirstPort will arrange for Fire Risk Assessments to be carried out, undertaken by Competent Persons. Every development the business manages will have a Fire Risk Assessment carried out at least once every three years; some more regularly. FirstPort will also instruct and supervise any works required, as a result of a Fire Safety Risk Assessment or Fire Officer’s visit to developments.
- Fire Officers can enter any block of flats to inspect the building, regardless of whether there has been a fire. They may ask to see the Fire Safety Risk Assessment and issue enforcement notices to improve fire safety if needed.
- FirstPort has a robust programme of monitoring and maintaining fire equipment including detection, fire fighting and protection systems and keep records and will always make any recommended amendments promptly.

Most buildings that FirstPort manages have a ‘stay put’ policy. This guidance is followed unless a flat is being affected by fire or smoke. It is based on the fire protection provided in the building and the walls and doors of each flat. Although fires in flats, unfortunately, occur daily throughout the country, the fire usually only affects the flat on fire.

However, some smoke may enter corridors when residents leave the flat on fire, or firefighters enter the flat to extinguish the fire. ‘Staying put’ will reduce the risk of entering a smoky corridor unnecessarily and potentially being overcome by smoke. It will also allow firefighters to tackle the fire safely without being delayed by residents evacuating through the stairway.

Electrical Safety Work at Height

The Electricity at Work Regulation 1989 requires FirstPort to take precautions with electrical systems, equipment and conductors, and for work activities on or near electrical equipment.

Any electrical equipment supplied by FirstPort such as a vacuum cleaner, must be regularly tested and properly maintained. A visual inspection and a more formal test should be carried out at the intervals recommended by the Electrical Safety Council (ESC).

The fixed wire electrical system, in the communal area of a block must be inspected every 5 years. Any electricians contracted to work on site must be competent (NICEIC registered).

Failure to properly manage electrical equipment and systems could lead to serious injury or death caused by contact with electricity or a fire. FirstPort arranges for 5 year electrical testing at developments and instructs approved and verified electrical contractors to carry out the work.

Falls from height are the number one cause of workplace fatalities in the UK. Any work at height should be avoided if it is practical to do it another way, as governed by the Work at Height Regulations 2005. These regulations can apply to any height if a person could be injured as result of falling from it.

It could include:

- Changing light bulbs
- Window cleaning
- Testing smoke detectors or clearing gutters.

If work at height cannot be avoided, it must be assessed and subsequently planned to mitigate risk as much as possible.

FirstPort will instruct an approved contractor to undertake work at height that requires the use of access equipment or fall protection equipment.





Legionella

FirstPort has a responsibility to reduce the risks of exposure to Legionella. This is covered under the HSE Approved Code of Practice, ‘Legionella Bacteria in Water Systems’ 2013.

Legionella is a bacterium commonly found in water systems, which can cause Legionnaires’ disease, a potentially fatal form of pneumonia. Legionella makes people ill when they breath in the contaminated airborne water droplets.

- FirstPort has a duty to control the risks of legionella in any pipes, tanks and taps in communal areas.
- Cold water tanks, taps and showers within individual flats are the responsibility of the leaseholders.
- FirstPort will arrange for a risk assessment of communal water systems and any subsequent risk assessments (typically every two years), as well as ensuring appropriate control measures are in place.

Hazardous Substances

- The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH) 2002 impose duties on FirstPort to prevent or control exposure to hazardous substances. The most relevant substances found in the communal areas of blocks of flats are cleaning materials and gardening chemicals.
- There needs to be an assessment of the risks of any materials stored in the communal areas. Most materials carry labels that identify the hazards that they pose, manufacturers also issue safety sheets on how to handle them. It is FirstPort’s duty to decide what instructions must be given to those who handle the materials, and what protective clothing is needed.
- If a contractor is supplying their own hazardous materials, then they must have a hazardous substance risk assessment for them e.g. how will they ensure they use, store and dispose of the chemicals safely.
- If hazardous chemicals being used are ingested, inhaled or come into contact with skin/eyes, they can cause harm as a result of not being adequately controlled. Poorly controlled chemicals can also cause or accelerate fires.
- FirstPort assess the risk of hazardous substances being used and introduce the most suitable/practical controls.

Asbestos

- The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 require FirstPort to manage asbestos in communal areas, which includes protecting anyone using or working in the premises from the risks to health that exposure to asbestos causes.
- FirstPort is responsible to know of any material that contains asbestos in the communal areas of the developments we manage. This includes the roof and main structure of the building.
- Asbestos is unlikely to be present in buildings built after 2000, but this should be checked.
- To identify asbestos, FirstPort will commission survey. Where it is found, there will be a policy for the management and control of it. There isn't a duty to remove asbestos, as in many cases it is actually more dangerous to do so.
- Failure to manage asbestos in a communal area can lead to exposure to deadly asbestos fibres. FirstPort arranges for an Asbestos Survey to be carried out by a competent person, notifying contractors about the presence of asbestos at FirstPort developments when instructing them.





Equipment and machinery

FirstPort has a statutory obligation to test certain pieces of equipment regularly. The loss of applicable equipment includes:

- Passenger lifts
- Gates and barriers
- Access cradles
- Eye bolts and running lines (for roof access) and gas boilers.
- Equipment will be removed should it fail inspection and necessary repairs made promptly.
- Records of inspections and repairs are maintained throughout the equipment’s lifetime.
- Performance reviews are also carried out regularly by competent contractors.

Trips/Slips and Falls

FirstPort has a responsibility to reduce the risk of slips, trips and falls on the developments the business manages. Total prevention is, unfortunately, not always achievable, but FirstPort is dedicated to minimising accidents wherever possible. When reported or spotted, trip or slip hazards will be made safe immediately. If they cannot be made safe immediately they will be isolated, clearly identified and dealt with as soon as possible.

Final Word

A development may be part of someone's home, but health and safety laws still apply. If contractors are working in communal areas, it then also becomes a place of work. At times, added costs might be incurred to ensure that developments comply with the necessary standards. The price of not complying could be much higher should things go wrong.

FirstPort is entirely committed to ensuring that the health and safety of residents, customers and employees is always protected.
