

Flats with Private Balconies, Fire Safety Arrangements



Introduction

Private Balconies are best described as the external area accessed from an individual flat. These can be a shared commodity or an individual space with clear separation from common areas that are normally open to the environment. These are usually provided with a covering or the covering of the floor above to protect it.

Clarion has a robust approach to the storage of items in enclosed common areas of flats and Converted Street Properties (CSP) which form the means of escape. This is sometimes described as 'zero tolerance'. However, we feel it appropriate to adopt a 'managed approach' to residents own private Balconies, as the risk is perceived to be lower.

Clarion's policy is that the items stored or displayed on the Balconies should not endanger others, restrict access or impair the means of escape.

This is difficult to quantify for every scenario and situation; however, common sense and risk evaluation of this should be used by the Housing Teams to make that decision.

The guidance below is to assist in that decision making process and risk evaluation and to give some assurance of their decisions being correct. If in doubt, please contact a member of the [Fire Safety Team](#).

Fire Safety Considerations

- Barbecues are not allowed to be used on Balconies under any circumstances

Highly Combustible Material & Flammable Liquids

- Residents must not store excessive amounts of highly combustible material or any flammable liquids on a shared or private balconies. (This includes fridges, freezers, tumble dryers and washing machines).

Electrical Equipment

- Live electrical equipment must not be used or stored on shared or private Balconies
- Mobility Scooters must not be charges on a private balcony.

Smoking

- Smoking in open areas is permitted, however residents should use ash trays and dispose of smoking materials responsibly to minimise risk.
- Cigarettes must not be thrown off balconies.

External Furniture

- No Sheds or Heavy Structures are allowed on balconies
- No flammable products allowed on balconies including: flooring, fencing, panelling or screening (i.e. astro-turf/cane/wicker)
- A limited amount of external furniture is acceptable on balconies as long as the criteria detailed above is met in terms of combustibility (900mm access routes for shared balconies)

Plants & Scrubs

- If placed on a suitable surface with drainage, plants may be permitted on a residents Balcony as long as:
 - Consideration is taken towards neighbours below when watering
 - Any planters must be secured by ties to prevent accident knocking
 - No pots or equivalent are placed on sills or ledges of the Balcony

Private Balcony Restrictions Summary:

- No Sheds, Fencing or heavy structures
- No Barbeques
- No Electrical Appliances
- No charging of Mobility Scooters
- No Gas Cylinders or Patio Heaters
- No excessive amounts of highly combustible material
- No Flammable products and liquids
- No ignition sources

Enforcement

Where a significant fire risk is noted by a Resident or a Housing Officer and the risk is immediate and/or it is high risk, Clarion will take the appropriate action.

Where a breach of this guidance is noted, and the threat posed is not immediate and/or it is medium to low risk, Clarion will write to the Resident, informing them of the breach and giving the Resident 28 days to remedy the situation.

If an items is required to be removed to remedy a breach in TA, a TORT notice may also be placed on the item. If the resident has not taken the appropriate action after 28 days, Clarion will remedy the breach, e.g. by removing items.

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