HOUSING FITNESS STANDARD

THE PRACTICE OF THE NEW FITNESS RATING SYSTEM

(HOUSING HEALTH & SAFETY RATING SYSTEM)

FORMER FITNESS STANDARD HOUSING ACT 1985 SECTION 604 AS AMENDED

- Serious disrepair
- Stability
- Dampness
- Water Supply
- Sanitation/Drainage
- Bathing Facilities
- Food Preparation
- Heating
- Lighting
- Ventilation

Reasonably Suitable for Occupation

FORMER FITNESS STANDARDS

OPTIONS

UNFIT

MSCA

- **Repair Notice**
- **Closing Order**
- **Demolition Order**
- **Clearance Area**
- **Deferred Action**
- **Renovation**

FIT

- **Repair Notice**
- **Nuisance (EPA)**
- **Defective Premises (BA)**
- **Renovation**
  - * **Grants**
  - * **Group Repair**
  - * **Private Finance**

FORMER FITNESS STANDARD

NOT INCLUDED

- **Internal Arrangement**
- **Design and Layout**
- **Radon**
- **Fire Safety**
- **Energy Efficiency**
- **Air Quality**
- **Environment**
- **Asbestos**
- **Security**
- **Council Houses**

WHAT WAS WRONG WITH FORMER FITNESS STANDARD?

- Doesn’t include the most serious housing hazards
- Doesn’t differentiate between marginal unfit and grossly unfit
- Doesn’t apply to all forms of residential accommodation

NEW HAZARD RATING SYSTEM OBJECTIVES

- Capable of being used for various purposes
- Identify the most serious threats to health and safety
- Identify and determine action required

- A rating system would improve on the existing standards by encompassing all the important safety risks in the home and by distinguishing between the severity of different tasks.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF A RATING SYSTEM

- Could include all serious hazards
- Could grade severity of danger
- Could be applied to all dwellings
- Could be extended and updated

HIGHEST RISKS IN DWELLINGS

1. Cold Homes
2. Radon
3. Falls on Stairs
4. Falls on the Level
5. Fire
6. Burns and Scolds
7. House Dust Mites
8. Environmental Tobacco Smoke
9. Falls from Windows etc
10. Slips involving Baths etc
11. Carbon Monoxide

PRINCIPLES

- **A dwelling should provide a safe healthy environment for any occupants or visitors**
- **A dwelling should be free from unnecessary and avoidable hazards**
- **Where hazards are unavoidable they should be made as safe as possible.**

The System is Hazard Based

Relevant -

- **Potential to harm**

Irrelevant –

- **Cost**
- **Extent of work**

AIMS & ASSUMPTIONS

- **Be hazard based**
  i.e. the effect, not the defect
- **Rate the seriousness of the hazard**
- **Be practical in its application**
- **Be legislatively sound**
- **Be evidence based**

HAZARDS & FAULTS

A **Hazard** is the effect that may result from a fault and which has the potential to cause harm.

A **Fault** is a failure to meet the ideal, whether that failure is inherent or a result of deterioration.

The **Ideal** is what is currently perceived to be the safest performance criteria that can be expected.

POTENTIAL HEALTH & SAFETY HAZARDS

Risks from –

- Excessive temperatures
- Falls
- Fire
- Hot surfaces or materials
- Damp, mould growth etc
- Air pollutants (CO etc)
- Radiation
- Electrical hazards
- Noise
- Lead
- Asbestos etc
- Entry by intruders
- Crowding and space
- Explosions
- Infections from other sources
- Poor domestic hygiene, pests & refuse
- Poor provision for food safety
- Inadequate facilities for personal hygiene
- Inadequate sanitation or drainage
- Contaminated water supply
- Structural failure
- Inadequate lighting
- Uncombusted Fuel Gas
- Entrapment & Collision
- Poor Ergonomics

HAZARD PROFILES

For each hazard –

- **Provide a definition**
- **Describe its potential for harm**
- **Identify any particular vulnerable group**
- **Describe the ‘Ideal’**
- **Give details of relevant features**
- **Provide guidance on matters to be taken into account**

SOURCE OF THE EVIDENCE

- Building regulation and safety (1995, BRE)
- Building regulation and health (1995, BRE)
- Building regulation and fire safety (Unpublished, BRE)
- Home Accident Surveillance System (21st Annual Report, 1997 Data (DTI)
- English House Condition Survey 1996 Data

HEALTH EFFECTS OF HOUSING

Each year, on average, housing conditions are directly responsible for –

- **Up to 50,000 deaths; and**
- **Around 0.5 million injuries and illnesses requiring medical attention**

ACCIDENTS

	Killed	Injured
Home (1995)	4,066	2.7 million
Road (1996)	3,598	316,704
Work (1995)	376	1.5 million

FALLS ON STAIRS

- **Stair related falls account for –**

  - **230,000 treated injuries p.a.**

  - **500 deaths p.a.**

- **Vulnerable group – those 65+**

FIRE

Fires in dwellings cause –

- **587 deaths a year**

- **10,989 injuries a year**

  Of these –

  - **354 deaths and 5,796 injuries are in single household occupied dwellings**
  - **233 deaths and 5,193 injuries are in HMOs**

- **Vulnerable group – those 65+**

STEPS IN SURVEY PROCEDURE

- **Start by recording faults.**
- **For each fault recorded, surveyor asked which of the following is appropriate –**

  Remedial action: Further investigation; or

  No action?

- **Once survey completed, surveyor scores the dwelling for each hazard.**

REQUIREMENTS FOR A SYSTEM OF RATING HAZARDS

- **Be capable of comparing different types of hazard**
- **Take account of both likelihood of an occurrence and severity of outcome**
- **Provide a numerical score for each hazard**

RELATING PEOPLE & HAZARDS

Potential hazards assessed in relation to:

- **the most vulnerable class of person who might typically occupy or visit the dwelling e.g. – potential hazard from gaps in banisters judged in terms of young child**

LIKELIHOOD

The likelihood of an occurrence over the next twelve months which exposes a vulnerable individual to a hazard.

An ‘occurrence’ is an event or a period of time.

HEALTH OUTCOME(S)

- **The possible outcomes from an occurrence are given as Classes of Harm –**

- **The four main Classes of Harm are –**

  - **Class I – Extreme**
  - **Class II – Severe**
  - **Class III – Serious**
  - **Class IV – Moderate**

Class I - Extreme

Examples include –

Death, permanent paralysis below the neck, malignant lung cancer, regular and severe pneumonia, permanent loss of consciousness, and 80% or more burn injuries.

Class II - Severe

Examples include –

Chronic confusion, mild strokes, regular and severe fever, loss of a hand or foot, serious fractures, very serious burns, and loss of consciousness for days.

Class III - Serious

Examples include –

Chronic and severe stress, mild heart attack, regular and persistent dermatitis, malignant but treatable skin cancer, loss of a finger, severe concussion, serious puncture wounds, and serious strain or sprain injuries.

Class IV - Moderate

Examples include –

Occasional and severe discomfort, chronic or regular skin irritation, benign tumours, broken finger, sprained hip, moderate cuts to face or body, severe bruising to body, and regular and serious coughs or colds.

To Obtain a Numerical Value

- **Likelihood expressed as a ratio**
  e.g. 1 in 200, 1 in 10; or 1 in 1,000

- **Weighing given to each Class of Harm to reflect degree of incapacity –**

Class of harm	
I Extreme	10,000
II Severe	1,000
III Serious	300
IV Moderate	10

Example Hazard Rating

Class of harm		Risk -		Spread %		
10,000	x	1/10	x	0	=	0
1,000	x	1/10	x	10	=	1,000
300	x	1/10	x	60	=	1,800
10	x	1/10	x	30	=	30
		Hazard Score				2,930

From Scores to Risk

Hazard Score of	Equivalent Annual risk of Death of
1	1 in 1,000,000
10	1 in 100,000
100	1 in 10,000
1,000	1 in 1,000
2,000	1 in 500
10,000	1 in 100
20,000	1 in 50
100,000	1 in 10

Acceptable & Unacceptable Risks

- **Acceptable Risk - 1 in 10,000**

Equivalent to average annual risk of dying in a traffic accident

A Hazard Score of 100

- **Unacceptable Risk – 1 in 1,000**

A Hazard Score of 1,000

Banding of Scores

Band	Score
A	**5,000 or more**
B	**2,000 – 4,999**
C	**1,000 – 1,999**
D	**500 – 999**
E	**200 – 499**
F	**100 - 199**
G	**50 – 99**
H	**20 – 49**
I	**10 – 19**
J	**9 or less**

ENFORCEMENT POWERS

A Hazard Score of more than 1,000 - There is a Mandatory requirement to take action.

A Hazard Score of less than 1,000 - There is a discretionary requirement to take action.

ENFORCEMENT POWERS AVAILABLE

- Improvement notice
- Prohibition order
- Suspended notices
- Hazard awareness notice
- Emergency remedial action
- Emergency prohibition notice