

## Safety in your building

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Grand Union Heights,  
Northwick Road,  
London,  
HA0 1LB

Olympic Office Centre  
8 Fulton Road  
Wembley  
HA9 0NU

[www.networkhomes.org.uk](http://www.networkhomes.org.uk)  
[info@networkhomes.org.uk](mailto:info@networkhomes.org.uk)  
0300 373 3000

Dear residents,

### Balconies and the risk of fire

We are writing to inform you about the risks arising from the presence of combustible materials on balconies and to ask you to please refrain from storing any items on your balconies.

Balconies are a potential source of fire spread on the external wall of buildings. We have written to you already informing you about the current increased risk in the external wall system of your building. Furthermore, the fire risk on balconies can be increased due to the use of them for storage, or the unsafe disposal of smoking materials and the misuse of barbecues.

To be clear, these uses increase the risk of fire not only occurring on your balcony but spreading across the external facade and into the building too. There have been several incidents of balcony fires which have led to external fire spread. The London Fire Brigade advise that barbecues should **never be used on balconies**: <https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/safety/the-home/cooking/bbqs/>. The Building Research Establishment (BRE) published examples of fire incidents in their 2016 report "Fire safety issues with balconies" which can be accessed at: [https://www.bre.co.uk/filelibrary/Fire\\_and\\_Security/FI---Fire-safetyandbalconies-July-16.pdf](https://www.bre.co.uk/filelibrary/Fire_and_Security/FI---Fire-safetyandbalconies-July-16.pdf).

In an attempt to manage this risk, our policy is that smoking, the use of barbecues and storage of flammable property on balconies is strictly prohibited. An example of a relevant clause in a lease agreement regarding barbecues is below:

26. *No barbecues, trellis, washing lines/dryers or any other unsightly item or article is to be placed on any balcony or terrace.*

As guidance for balcony use, we ask that you please:

- Remove any cooking equipment on balconies
- Remove any personal possessions including plastic plant pots
- Remove any combustible materials
- Remove any sheds, wooden or other type of storage structure, including their contents
- Always take care when disposing of smoking materials, ensuring they are fully extinguished
- Never leave lit smoking materials unattended
- Never use open flame candles on balconies.

The above is for guidance only, it is not intended to be an exhaustive list of things you can do to keep you and your neighbours safe when using your balconies. We ask that you please follow the spirit of this guidance and do everything possible to ensure that the safety of your building is kept to a high standard.

Furthermore we will, in the interests of all residents, be carrying out routine inspections of the communal property including visual inspections of balconies too. And if it is found that balconies are being used for storage, you will be asked to remove these items.

This request is not made lightly; we do understand the value that your balcony has and appreciate that this will cause inconvenience to some. However, your safety is paramount. It is from this perspective only that we ask you to please comply with the contents of this letter. Failure to do so may result in legal action.

Thank you for your support and cooperation. And if you have any queries or would simply like to discuss this matter further, please contact us on [customerservice@networkhomes.org.uk](mailto:customerservice@networkhomes.org.uk).

Sincerely

Samuel Drinkwater  
Resident Management Team Leader