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Soar*

Property & Estate Management

# BUILDING SAFETY CASE



## Safeguarding residents

The government has determined its plans for what is known as the Building Safety Case. This is a key requirement under the Building Safety Act (BSA).

The Principal Accountable Person (PAP) will need to submit their building safety case from April 2024 onwards, when called upon by the Building Safety Regulator (BSR). Providing a detailed and robust building safety case allows regulators to uphold high standards of safety and mitigate the likelihood of accidents, disasters, or other incidents that could endanger lives or properties.

The building safety case is an important component of the regulatory framework, which is aimed at ensuring the safety and well-being of the occupants.

The building safety case typically includes detailed information about the design, construction materials, fire safety measures, structural integrity, maintenance protocols, and emergency procedures tailored to the characteristics and intended use of the building.

This document serves as a structured and systematic approach to address and help manage the safety risks associated with a building, such as the risk of fire spreading or structural failure.

## Information for the safety case

The PAP must keep a record of information pertaining to the building, to form part of the building safety case. Information for the safety case must be kept up to date and in a digital format which is easily accessible.

## Building information that must be collected includes:

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- Building height and the number of floors, residential units, and staircases
- The date the building was built, how it was built and the materials used
- Relevant design codes or standards
- Building control body completion certificates (where available)
- Building plans (the building's blueprints)
- Shared facilities e.g. car parks
- A description of the wider area e.g. nearby high-rise residential buildings, schools, or care homes and transport routes such as roads or railway tracks
- Services and utilities
- Building work or refurbishment that may impact building safety risks
- Actions or recommendations following a risk assessment
- A record of all safety measures

The government has published useful guidance on what needs to be included within the safety case and subsequent report. For more information, [click here](#).

## Gap Analysis

Given the complexities of compiling a safety case report, a gap analysis or applicability review is undertaken. This employs an in-depth review of what information or documentation is needed to properly determine the risks faced by a building and could include (but is not limited to):

- External wall surveys (FRAEW)
- Maintenance records for key fire safety equipment
- Utilities details
- Layout drawings
- Original or retrospective fire strategy
- Details of the building structure
- Compartmentation surveys

Please note as the gap analysis identifies missing items, further surveys may be required.

The regulator does anticipate that with existing buildings, that may have changed owner/manager several times over the years, this information may not be readily available. However, there is an expectation that the Principal Accountable Person takes reasonable steps to obtain the information.

Once the gap analysis is complete, compiling the safety case report can begin.

The safety case report is a continuous document that requires regularly reviewing and updating if work is carried out to manage building safety risks or if work on the building impacts the safety risks. Often, it will be suggested that annual review or following a serious incident is sufficient.



## Engagement Strategy

Another key element to the safety case report is the resident's engagement strategy. A core principle to the BSA is ensuring those responsible for buildings engage with residents on matters of safety. Each PAP must submit a residents engagement strategy that sets out how residents and owners over 16+ can be consulted on building safety decisions. The strategy should also set out the complaints process if residents want to report a safety concern relating to the fire and structural safety of the building.

## What will this cost?

A safety case and the safety case report may require significant financial outlay due to the costs associated with appointing external consultants and third parties. The BSR has also made clear that they intend to charge a fee to review safety cases. We recommend consideration given to financial budgeting requirements to ensure funds are in place so that the compilation of the safety case can start without delay. Many external consultants will also be experiencing a high demand for their services so it is important to be proactive and get any additional surveys etc instructed sooner rather than later.

## What is the benefit?

The building safety case serves as a comprehensive and structured approach to identifying and managing safety risks associated with buildings throughout their lifecycle. The information as part of the case allows those responsible to evaluate potential hazards and implement appropriate control measures.

In addition, the safety case enhances accountability in building safety management. It provides a documented record of safety measures and procedures, allowing stakeholders such as regulators, occupants, and emergency responders to understand the safety protocols in place and the rationale behind them. This transparency can foster trust and confidence in the safety of the building among its occupants.

Moreover, the safety case promotes continuous improvement in building safety standards. Emerging risks can be addressed and appropriate measures taken, whilst performing best practice according to the latest legislation.

Overall, the safety case contributes to the overarching goal of safeguarding lives and property by promoting a proactive and systematic approach to building safety management.

The safety case report is a fundamental element of building safety and how the Principal Accountable Person has considered the fire and structural risks associated with the building and how those risks will be managed and mitigated. It is a tool in showing that all reasonable steps have been taken to ensure the residents safety.