



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT IS AN EWS 1 FORM?

The Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has issued guidance in the form of Advice Notes. Assessment of compliance with these has been consolidated into an External Wall System (EWS1) Form.

The premise is that a qualified professional must review the buildings' external façade, determine the risk and issue an EWS1 Form.

MY INSURANCE COMPANY/MORTGAGE PROVIDERS SAY I NEED AN EWS 1 FORM, IS THIS CORRECT?

Currently insurance companies and mortgage providers recognise that residential buildings with an occupied floor more than 18 metres above ground require an EWS1 Form. Some organisations are applying the same process to all residential buildings' external facades.

IFC suggest, if the highest floor in your building is less than 18 metres above the ground, that you go back to the insurance company/mortgage provider, and query whether the EWS1 form is necessary.

AS A PRIVATE APARTMENT OWNER AND BEING TOLD THAT I REQUIRE AN EWS HOW DO I OBTAIN ONE?

The EWS1 Form can only reasonably be applied to the whole building not individual apartments. You should contact your freeholder or managing agent to arrange for an EWS1 form to be prepared.

CAN ANY QUALIFIED PERSON PRODUCE AN EWS 1 FORM?

The EWS Form is split in to two options, options A or B:

Option A is for buildings where the materials used in the external wall would be unlikely to support combustion; in this case the signatory would need only the expertise to identify the relevant materials.

Option B is for buildings where Option A does not apply, and a more detailed review and hence higher level of fire expertise is required.

The current EWS Form details the relevant bodies or organisations that are capable of providing the correct signatory. IFC currently employ a number of Chartered Engineers with the Institution of Fire Engineers who can issue EWS1 forms under both options A and B.

MY BUILDING IS 17 METERS TALL; WILL I NEED TO CONSIDER ATTAINING AN EWS FORM NOW OR IN THE FUTURE?

At the time of writing the EWS1 is only applicable to residential buildings over 18 metres although IFC are keenly watching the changing regulatory landscape and are aware that this may change in the future.

I OWN MULTIPLE APARTMENT BUILDINGS; CAN YOU REVIEW MORE THAN ONE BUILDING?

IFC are happy to review multiple buildings.

EXTERNAL WALLS AND ATTACHMENTS

ARE THE REQUIRED REVIEWS FOR EXISTING BUILDINGS OR CAN YOU PROVIDE AN EWS FORM FOR BUILDINGS BEING BUILT?

IFC undertake both new and existing building reviews and provide the EWS1 Form.

WHAT IS YOUR PROCESS FOR UNDERTAKING AN EWS FORM?

For a new build IFC visit site and review the building, the installation of the specified materials and ensure that they are being installed in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions. We have found that we need to be on site at the beginning, middle and end to ensure that the first visit when the façade/brickwork is at the first floor is the start of the compliant installation of the compartmentation is the same during and by the time the building is to be completed. We provide a detailed report that supports the final EWS Report.

For an existing building we undertake a two stage approach. Initially we ask the client to release all the building façade information that they currently have, and we review; the more accurate the information the easier it is to assess if an EWS option A can be issued.

If the client released information is insufficient, we work with you and determine the location of proposed opening/penetrations into the façade or brickwork. We will ask that the client provides the opening and the access, and then IFC will attend site and review the cavities and materials so that we can prepare the EWS1 form. Making good penetrations after our inspection is the responsibility of the client.

WILL YOUR ENGINEERS NEED ACCESS TO THE BUILDING IN ORDER TO CONDUCT A SITE VISIT?

The premise for the EWS1 is to review the external façade of any residential building over 18 metres but through our experience we have included a site visit prior to any EWS Form sign off as we not only need to see the site, we also undertake a visual survey of the internal fire engineering.

The combination of the intrusive surveying for the external and the initial internal fire engineering review inform the risk based approach required for the EWS 1 Form sign off.

Where high quality information is available from the client, we may not need to carry out any further inspections.

HOW INTRUSIVE/DESTRUCTIVE WILL A SITE INVESTIGATION BE?

IFC need to determine the number of inspection locations to validate the conclusions within the EWS1 form. The proposed locations are determined by building review and to identify where horizontal and vertical cavity compartmentation should be installed and we work with you as the client to agree the locations as you know the site.

We will use the minimum number of intrusive penetrations as we are keenly aware of the finishes and potential aesthetic disruption to your buildings; the quantity of proposed penetrations is also determined by the building size and height.

