



BY EMAIL: partbconsultation@housing.gov.ie
Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
Custom House, Dublin 1, D01 W6X0

April 2023

Re: Public Consultation on the Review of Part B (Fire Safety) of the Building Regulations

To whom it concerns,

Please find general submission below from the Apartment Owners' Network on the review of Part B (Fire Safety) of the Building Regulations

History, aim and objectives of the Apartment Owners Network

The Apartment Owners Network (AON) is a national voluntary organisation established in 2007 to support homeowners in privately managed estates. The aim of the Network is to support owners, provide advice and represent their interests. For further detail please refer to [our website](#):

Amongst its objectives, the Network:

- Promotes best practices amongst Owners Management Companies (OMCs) and the conduct of their directors.
- Educates, informs and communicates with members in relation to matters of relevance and importance to the multi-unit development sector. In its education role, AON supports and advises apartment owners and OMCs (and their directors), where appropriate directing them to seek advice from relevant experts.

Fire safety is recognised by AON as one of the most important issues impacting high density communal living in multi-unit developments. As such AON maintains a watching brief on the issue of fire safety and a history of well publicised failures.

This timely review by government in terms of the adequacy of the current fire Regulations, also needs to address and rectify serious failures of 'light touch' regulation of the industry, particularly during the Celtic Tiger boom years. The full extent of this problem is still largely unquantified.



Current position

As is now widely reported in the public domain, there were serious shortcomings in the existing regulatory regime which was flagged as 'light touch' and which in reality gave rise to a situation where there was little or no regulation, other than self-certification by developers. In turn, this led to multiple breaches of regulations and poor quality control of the supervision of the construction elements in multi-unit developments, notably fire safety breaches. This gave rise to an organised national campaign to highlight the problem of 'light touch' regulation in terms of building defects and the urgent need for a redress scheme to allow owners of poorly constructed developments to bring their buildings up to standard.

Of particular concern to AON is how the extent of these problems will be identified, and whether those found to be culpable will ultimately be held accountable.

We note developments relating to fire safety regulation in the United Kingdom where similar industry-wide failings were highlighted by the Grenfell Tower fire. We submit that lessons may be learned from our UK peers when formulating Irish regulations.

AON will continue to support the work of the Construction Defects Alliance (CDA) in relation to the issue of construction defect remediation, which includes serious fire safety issues.

AON remains available to assist government in all matters associated with its mandate to promote and support the interests of apartments owners, OMCs, and the multi-unit development sector generally.

Thank you for your attention in this matter.

Allen Morgan
Director
Apartment Owners' Network.