



All detectors must be interlinked together so that all sound even if one is triggered and must be placed in circulation space/protected stairway within 7.5m of every habitable room door. If however due to the layout of the loft there is no circulation space, a smoke detector should be fitted in the room itself.

### Staircases

The new storey should be served by a staircase and the following should be considered:

- rise and going of treads;
- headroom height above pitch of stairs;
- headroom height above landings;
- handrails, guarding and balustrading.

See advisory leaflet on Stairs to Dwellings.

### Lofts Used as Storage Areas

Some lofts are converted to provide a storage area and it is sometimes assumed that no permission is required.

However, if the storage area in the loft is capable of being used as a living area or increase the loading on the existing roof then a Building Regulation submission is required. In such cases, before any work is carried out you should check with us and we will be happy to advise you on any requirements.

### General Advice

Some lofts are already converted for storage by previous occupants and you may wish to change the loft to some other use in which case this also may require a Building Regulation application. For any informal advice on loft conversions, the Building Control Section would be pleased to assist you. Please ring Stockton (01642) 526046 and ask for a Building Control Surveyor.

Although there are no restrictions on preparing plans you are advised that because of the complex nature of conversions professional advice should be sought.

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# Loft Conversion

Guidelines for Loft Conversion  
6<sup>th</sup> April 2007





## LOFT CONVERSIONS

Loft conversions are a popular way to create space within the existing building envelope.

It is important to recognise that loft conversions have additional restrictions placed upon them and are more complicated to build than simple extensions added to an existing building.

Loft conversions do not lend themselves easily to 'do it yourself' schemes unless the person carrying out the scheme is very competent in building work.

### Structure

- Are adequate load bearing walls and foundations in existence to take the additional loads of the new floor and any roof alterations?
- Are existing lintels adequate?
- Existing roof? Is it traditional, trussed rafter, roof trusses or some other construction? This is likely to have a direct bearing on the practicability and design.
- Can the existing construction and the new construction be proved to be stable? Structural calculations may well be required.

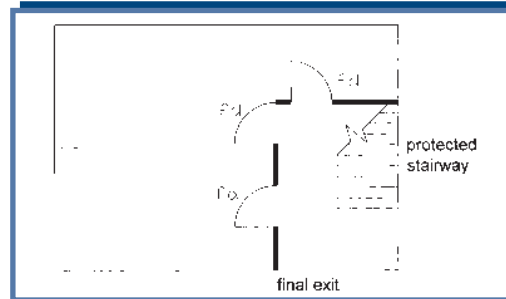
### Fire (Means of Escape)

#### • Provision for a protected route out

The new upper storey must be served by a fire protected stairway enclosure having a minimum 30-minute fire resisting construction and the enclosure should either:

- extend to a final exit, see Diagram 1a; or
- give access to at least two escape routes at ground level, each delivering to final exits and separated from each other by fire resisting construction, see Diagram 1b.

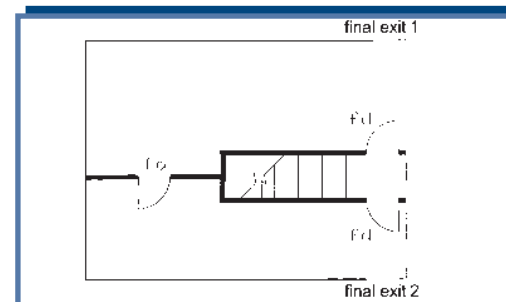
### Diagram 1a - FINAL EXITS



fd = FD20 fire door

█ = 30 minute fire resisting construction

### Diagram 1b - ALTERNATIVE FINAL EXITS



fd = FD20 fire door

█ = 30 minute fire resisting construction

#### • Doorways

Any new door forming the protected escape route protection will have to be a FD20 fire-resisting door and all existing doors on the escape route, including bathroom doors need to be replaced with FD20 fire doors and might involve the removal and replacement of door frames to accommodate the thicker fire doors and achieve the appropriate fire standard.

There is no requirements for these doors to have self-closers fitted-but if you are a builder or architect you are advised to inform your client of the importance of managing these fire doors i.e. keeping them shut etc.

#### • Glazing

Any glazing in the enclosure to the existing/new stair, including all fire doors is required to be 30-minute fire resisting glass.

#### • Fire separation floors

The new storey/floor must achieve 30-minutes fire-resisting construction. Depending upon whether you are re-retaining your existing ceilings suspended off the new floor construction, you will have to upgrade any sub-standard ceiling construction to ensure the new floor achieves this required rating.

The existing first floor construction would also normally have to be upgraded to a full 30-minute standard construction (which could mean under drawing the existing ceilings). However this can be avoided if the following conditions are satisfied:

- Only one storey is to be added and the total storey floor area is not more than 50m<sup>2</sup> ; and
- The storey contains no more than two rooms; and
- Floors, which separate rooms from the protected escape route/circulation spaces, are upgraded to or achieve a full 30-minute fire resistant standard.

#### • Smoke Alarms

Mains powered and battery backed up smoke detectors must be installed on each storey in accordance with BS5839-6: 2004 - Grade D - category LD3 standard