Health and safety checks for the common parts

A calendar of the routine checks a self-managed building needs, from water hygiene and lifts to electrics, asbestos and play areas.

Beyond fire safety, the common parts of a building carry other risks. The board is responsible for managing them, and for being able to show that it has. The table below lists the checks most buildings need. Your own risk assessments will show which apply, and how often.

AREA	WHAT TO CHECK	USUALLY DONE BY
Water systems	Legionella risk assessment and control measures	A competent water hygiene contractor
Lifts	Thorough examination and servicing	A lift engineer and insurer's inspector
Electrical installation	Periodic inspection of the common parts	A qualified electrician
Gas appliances in communal areas	Safety check and servicing	A Gas Safe registered engineer
Asbestos	Management survey and plan, where the building may contain it	An accredited surveyor
Emergency lighting and alarms	Testing and servicing	A competent engineer
Roof, balconies and structure	Inspection of condition and safety	A surveyor or engineer
Trees, paths and grounds	Hazards and trip risks	A grounds contractor or arborist
Play areas, if any	Regular inspection	A competent inspector

Risk assessments

Assess the risks to residents, visitors and contractors, and write down what you found and what you did. Keep it proportionate: a small block with no lift or plant will have a shorter list.

Water safety

The common water systems can carry Legionella bacteria if they are not managed. A competent person should assess the risk and set out simple controls,

such as temperature checks and flushing of little-used outlets.

Lifts

Passenger lifts need regular thorough examination under the lifting equipment regulations, usually at intervals set by the regulations and the insurer, as well as routine servicing. Keep every report.

Electrics and gas

A periodic electrical inspection of the common parts is good practice, at intervals set by the electrician. Gas appliances you control must be installed and maintained by a Gas Safe registered engineer.

Asbestos

For older buildings, the duty to manage asbestos in the common parts is real. Find out whether a survey exists and whether the material is safe in place.

Contractors on site

Check their insurance, method statements and safe working. Residents must not be put at risk by their work.

Keep records

Use a compliance calendar to show what is due, who is responsible and when it was last done. Keep the certificates and reports together, and make sure more than one director knows where they are.

> Do not rely on memory. Safety checks lapse when the person who remembered them moves on.

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