

Scouting Ireland
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Ref: L27/2017 - Scout Den Fire Safety Notice Update

18th September 2017

Dear Scouter,

I am writing to you to update you on the current fire safety issue, which arose following a number of complaints to Dublin Fire Brigade (DFB) from members of the Public.

Following a communication from the Chief Fire Officer, I can now confirm that it **will not** be necessary for Scout Groups to obtain certification that allows for 'sleeping risks' as noted in the previous correspondence (L24/2017). DFB has advised Scouting Ireland that fire safety risk assessments should be carried out in properties with respect to sleepovers and other activities. This is not the same as obtaining a fire safety certificate.

We understand that the restrictions that have been in place for the last number of weeks may have caused inconvenience and worry for some Scout Groups and apologise for any disappointment or disruption that resulted from this. The notice from Scouting Ireland was issued following a clear instruction we received from DFB regarding a serious risk that had been identified. I am aware that DFB only have jurisdiction in a portion of the country but, as noted above, a serious risk had been identified for our Scout Groups, so action needed to be taken immediately to address this. This requirement was rooted in the best interests of all of our members, both youth and adult.

Since the first notice was issued, our Risk Management Advisory Team (RMAT) have been working on developing a solution to this issue and the Board of Directors gave this serious consideration at its meeting on the 9th September 2017

The Board of Directors, at its meeting, agreed the following approach to bringing about a clear and comprehensive resolution in the quickest possible timeframe:

- 1) Agree the principle that each Scout Group is autonomous and is ultimately responsible for its own premises and safety within, and as such Scout Groups can, if they wish, engage their own fire safety consultant to advise on a safety plan for their premises.
- 2) Adopt the recommended plan (listed below) from the RMAT.
- 3) A suite of resources will be developed by the National Youth Programme Committee (NYPC) and RMAT regarding fire safety for use by each of our programme sections.

National Plan

1. Scouting Ireland has engaged the services of a Fire Safety Consultant to act as advisor to the organisation.

Reg. No. 397094
Charity No. CHY3507

PATRON Michael D. Higgins PRESIDENT OF IRELAND



Member of World Organisation of the Scout Movement

Directors: A list of names and personal details of every director of the company is available for inspection to the public at the company's registered office for a nominal fee. Scouting Ireland is a company limited by guarantee exempt from using the word "limited". Registered Office: Scouting Ireland National Office, Larch Hill, Dublin 16

2. The Fire Safety Consultant will engage with the RMAT, the Training Team and other elements of Scouting Ireland to develop one common safety standard for dens and meeting places.
3. The Fire Safety Consultant, in appropriate situations, will liaise with the local Fire Authority on behalf of individual Scout premises in the ownership of Scouting Ireland or its trust companies or by any other trust that complies with our Constitution and Rules.
4. The RMAT are in discussion with Dublin Fire Brigade about providing initial training to a number of Scouters around the country. These Scouters would then draw up a fire safety training module, with help where necessary, with a view to it being passed down the line to Counties and Groups.
 - a. Note: This training module will be developed, like all matters pertaining to training, by the Chief Commissioner (Adult Resource) and the National Adult Resources Committee in conjunction with the RMAT.
5. A number of offers of assistance have been received recently from Scouters that have expertise Fire Safety. The RMAT plan to utilise this expertise to validate the solutions proposed by the consultant and the RMAT.

Until such fire safety risk assessments are carried out by Scout Groups, **we request that Groups continue not to host overnights in their dens.** We are working to implement the National Plan in the immediate term and produce the advice and risk assessment resources as soon as practical to do so, but Scout Groups are free, as noted above, to engage their own fire safety consultant to advise on a safety plan for their premises.

Should you have any additional queries, suggestion or concerns, please contact our Group Support Facilitator James Fox at jfox@scouts.ie. I will continue to be in contact, and will keep groups informed as we complete the task required.

Yours in Scouting



Charles McGuinness
National Secretary

CC:

All Scouters
Professional Staff

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