

# Simultaneous evacuation strategies in London

Image of a London Fire Brigade truck.

## Key information

Publication type: General

Publication date: Wednesday 14 May 2025

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## Introduction

On the 9 May 2025, Sir Sadiq Khan [put forward his candidate](#) for the next London Fire Commissioner, Jonathan Smith, subject to confirmation by the [London Assembly Fire Committee](#). If he is appointed, one of the challenges facing him will be the fire risks in tall buildings. This post from the Scrutiny & Investigation team's William Weihermuller presents recent data on the the use of simultaneous evacuation strategies in buildings in London, a key indicator of fire risk.

## Simultaneous evacuation strategies

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Figure -

Data was collected from responses to Assembly Member questions about Waking Watches. The responses can be found here by searching for "Waking Watches and London's Boroughs": [Find an Answer | London City Hall](#)

Between March 2021 and August 2024, the GLA released data produced by the London Fire Brigade on the number of high-rise residential buildings that have a 'simultaneous evacuation' strategy in place, in response to questions from the Assembly. Simultaneous evacuation means that buildings will no longer operate a 'stay put' policy in the case of fire. In these buildings, residents should be alerted to a fire anywhere in the building, via an

alarm, by firefighters or 'waking watch' personnel on site, and asked to evacuate immediately.

This data therefore indicates the number of tall buildings where there are significant fire safety issues that have not yet been fully addressed. This number has increased over time as additional buildings with fire safety concerns have been identified.

The figures can change daily when interim measures are required, or a building is remediated and no longer requires the interim measures.

The data used in the above graph was provided in response to questions from Assembly Members. As of time of writing, the last question on waking watches was asked in September 2024.

## **Further information**

Further data on cladding remediation can be found on the Research Unit's [Monitoring cladding remediation progress in London](#) page. This page is periodically updated with the latest data on the number of monitored buildings and progress towards remediation across the city.

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