

Have your say on the UK government's safety reporting proposals for buildings



Structural-Safety calls on the engineering community to respond to key questions in the UK government's post-Hackitt safety consultation.

Introduction

The tragedy of the Grenfell Tower fire on 14 June 2017, which claimed the lives of 72 people, rocked confidence in the building safety system in the UK. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) published a consultation on 6 June (www.gov.uk/government/consultations/building-a-safer-future-proposals-for-reform-of-the-building-safety-regulatory-system) seeking views on proposals for a radically new building safety system in England, which puts the safety of residents at its heart.

Safety reporting proposals

A key part of the new system is the reporting proposals for both fire and structural safety issues. The government proposals (see pages 71–75 of the consultation) for safety reporting

for all those who work on buildings are to:

- expand and strengthen the existing CROSS (Confidential Reporting on Structural Safety) scheme to collect more voluntary reports on structural safety and to introduce a scheme for collecting reports on fire safety issues
- implement a new mandatory occurrence reporting system to the building safety regulator for key dutyholders to facilitate reporting of fire and structural safety issues.

Structural-Safety's view

Structural-Safety fully supports the government's safety reporting proposals and its view that the best systems of oversight and regulation ensure that the people operating within them learn from their experiences, without fear of blame or retribution.

Have your say

In the consultation, the government wants to establish the level of support from the industry for the safety reporting proposals.

We encourage both individuals and organisations to support the proposals by responding to the two consultation questions highlighted here, while considering our comments on the questions when framing your answer. This should take less than 10 minutes.

We ask for as many of you to respond as possible. If the proposals receive adequate support, MHCLG may be able to provide early approval for the support necessary for strengthening and extending the existing CROSS scheme. The deadline for responding is 31 July, but we encourage you to respond as early as possible so that we can take these proposals forward without further delay.

Respond to the consultation

When responding to the consultation, on the 'Table of Contents' page, tick the box marked 'Chapter 3 – Part C' to only answer the two questions below. You do not need to answer all the consultation questions.

Q4.9. Do you agree that the Client, Principal Designer, Principal Contractor, and accountable person during occupation should have a responsibility to establish reporting systems and report occurrences to the building safety regulator? If not, please support your view.

- Structural-Safety supports the proposal to establish reporting systems in organisations and for the lessons learned from these reports to be disseminated across the industry, following the methods used by CROSS.
- In the view of Structural-Safety:
 - the existing voluntary CROSS reporting system for structural safety issues will be enhanced by the addition of reporting for fire safety issues to improve public safety
 - the introduction of mandatory reporting will also improve public safety and should be for occurrences where the level of risk for affecting life safety is high in buildings above 18m in height
 - voluntary reporting through CROSS should be applied across all buildings, both above and below 18m in height.
- To add your support, please answer this question by agreeing with the proposal and, where possible, present evidence to support your view, e.g. explain how CROSS has helped you or your organisation to improve safety.

Q4.15. Do you think the proposed system of mandatory occurrence reporting will work during the design stage of a building? If yes, please provide suggestions of occurrences that could be reported during the design stage of a building.

- This is a complex subject because, during design, there are frequently potential safety issues that are identified and designed out as part of the process. Indeed, this is an essential component of iterative design which will be strengthened by the proposed regulatory regime.
- Present your views on whether safety issues resolved during the design stage of a project (i.e. before construction begins) should be reported to CROSS on a voluntary basis or to the building safety regulator on a mandatory basis. Use examples to support your views where possible.
- If safety issues are not resolved during the design stage, they can manifest themselves as safety occurrences in the construction or operation stages of buildings, where the level of risk for affecting life safety can be higher. The proposed regulatory system is a safeguard in that the processes leading up to Gateway 2, before construction begins, are thoroughly scrutinised. Present your views on whether safety issues not resolved during the design stage of a project should be reported to CROSS on a voluntary basis or to the building safety regulator on a mandatory basis. Again, use examples to support your views.



Respond to the consultation at
www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/BuildingSafetyConsultation.

Your response will go directly to MHCLG, but if you have any queries about the process, please contact Structural-Safety (cross@structural-safety.org).