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Review

### Building safety and human behaviour in fire: A literature review

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### Abstract

The most crucial aspect of a building's safety in the face of fire is the possibility of safe escape. An important precondition is that its fire safety facilities enable independent and adequate fire response performances by the building's occupants. In practice, it appears that the measures currently required by law do not always provide the support that people in burning buildings need. Consequently, understanding how individuals behave in the case of fire and fire evacuation is essential if we are to bring fire safety measures into line with occupants'™ needs during an incident. This paper contains a review of the available literature on human behaviour in a fire so far as building safety is concerned. The findings are presented as an overview of the critical factors which determine occupants'™ fire response performances, namely the characteristics of fire, human beings and buildings. The study highlights that some of the assumptions about the existing paradigm of fire safety in buildings are not consistent with the knowledge set out in the literature. The key observation is that psychonomics appear to have significant

out in the literature. The key observation is that psychonomics appear to have significant influence on occupants' fire response performances. Accordingly, the traditional approach to fire safety will have to be supplemented by scientific knowledge from this field. Hence, there is a need for a new approach to fire safety design in buildings, which is set out herein.



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## Keywords

Fire response performance; Evacuation; Human behaviour in fire; Psychonomics; Building fire safety; Fire safety regulations; Conceptual framework

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