

Deciphering the code

Infographic: Shaer Reaz
Source: Fatiha Polin; BNBC regulations
Illustration: Nahfia Jahan Monni

Amidst a series of tragic deaths resulting from fires - in the alleyways of Old Dhaka and the towering high rises of Dhaka North - came allegations of building owners and developers flouting codes and corruption among RAJUK officials. The Bangladesh National Building Code (BNBC) provides a list of rules to follow, but what do they actually mean?

Reading the infographic:

- Follow the key for must-have elements of fire safety, according to the BNBC.
- Follow the numbers for recommendations from architects and civil engineers.

key

- Smoke detectors
- Sprinklers
- Heat detectors
- Staircase
- Emergency exits
- Fire-resistant materials
- Alarm sounders
- Manual call points
- Main fire alarm control panels
- Fire fighting box

***All of the above should be present on all floors of the building.

Fire escape specifications:

- 1.5 meter (4.9 ft) minimum width
- Must have handrail
- Must be well-lit (emergency backup)
- Must have non-slippery floor
- At least 2 exits for 500 people
- At least 3 exits for 501-1000 people
- At least 4 exits for 1000+ people

1 2 3 - Should be placed alternately.

4 - Buildings above 10 floors should have two staircases.

5 - Max. user per exit varies depending on the purpose of the building.

6 - Fire escape separated by fire resistant material (withstanding fire upto 1 hr).

7 - Main fire alarm control panel should sound the alarm immediately upon use.

8 - Alarm should continue to sound even after main power is cut.

9 - Easily accessible manual call for fire alarm.

