PUBLIC ADVISORY

Safe Buildings Begin with Competent, Registered and Accountable Engineering Practitioners

Following recent fire outbreaks in buildings and the demolition of houses found unsafe due to poor construction, the Institute of Engineering Rwanda (IER) advises the public, building owners, developers and facility managers to take the following measures to protect lives and property, as such incidents usually stem from poor design, unqualified workmanship, substandard materials and neglected maintenance.

1. Engage only registered and licensed engineering practitioners

Under **Law n° 023/2025 of 01/09/2025** governing the professions of architecture, engineering and quantity surveying, engineering services, from technical studies to the supervision and execution of construction works, must only be performed by a registered and licensed professional engineer, technologist, technician or consulting firm (Articles 32, 33, 40 and 41). Ask for the practitioner's identification number (Article 42) and verify it with IER before signing any contract.

2. Ensure buildings are managed and maintained by competent professionals

Building owners and facility managers should, as a minimum:

What must be done
• Have a fire safety assessment of public buildings and public places carried out before use.
• Install and maintain fire alarms, smoke detectors, sprinklers, extinguishers, hose reels and lightning arresters; homes need at least two extinguishers and a kitchen fire blanket.
• Have electrical installations inspected and certified, with proper protection and earthing, by registered and certified installers.
• Replace substandard wires and electrical accessories immediately.
• Keep exits, exit signs and evacuation plans in place, hold regular fire drills and appoint floor fire stewards.
• Insure public buildings and public places against fire, and have any structural, electrical or fire protection works, including a change of building use, designed and supervised by registered practitioners.

3. Practitioners engaged are accountable

Every IER member must comply with the building code and regulations in force (Law n° 023/2025, Article 43). Where an incident results from professional negligence or non-compliance, the practitioner or firm engaged shall be held accountable through disciplinary sanctions, including removal from the Roll of Members, and criminal or civil proceedings where applicable.

4. What the public should do

- Verify the registration and licence of any practitioner or firm before engaging them; never accept borrowed licences.
- Do not occupy, rent or buy buildings without valid permits, fire safety assessment and electrical certification.
- Do not overload sockets or block exits; report unsafe buildings and unlicensed practice to IER.

IER remains committed to working with Government and stakeholders to keep construction and facility management the reserve of competent, registered and compliant practitioners.

IER Advancing Engineering, Shaping the Future

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