

# Fire safety advice and guidance



Protect your home from fire

Advice:

## The dangers

**Imagine waking up to the smell of smoke. Imagine seeing your hall filling with thick black clouds, with flames round your kitchen door. It doesn't bear thinking about. But thinking about it can prevent it from happening. You can prevent most fires in the home. Being aware of the risks will help you avoid the risk of a fire starting in your home.**

### Smoking

Whether you or others in your home smoke, or whether you have occasional guests or visitors who smoke, you need to know the dangers. Every three days someone dies from a fire caused by a cigarette.

- Don't smoke when you are feeling sleepy, drunk or likely to pass out for any other reason.
- Use proper ashtrays.
- Don't leave a cigarette burning in an ashtray where it can fall out if knocked.
- Make doubly sure all cigarettes are out before you go to bed – wet the butts to make sure. Tip the ashtray into a metal bin, and put it outside.



### Candles

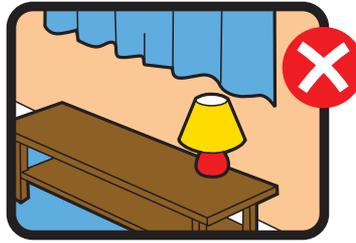
Treat lighted candles as you would any other flame.

- Put candles in a holder that won't fall over or burn.
- Put night lights or tea lights on a heat-resistant surface. They get hot enough to melt plastic.
- Make sure they're completely out. Don't leave candles burning when you go out of the room.
- Don't put lighted candles on shelves. The heat (which you cannot see) will set fire to the shelf above within hours.



## Lights

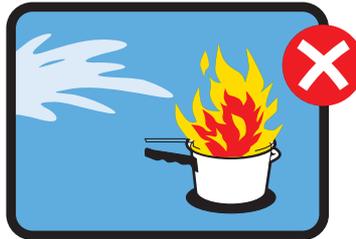
- Don't position lights or bulbs near curtains and other fabrics.
- The heat (which you cannot see) will set the fabric above alight within hours.



Advice:

## Chip pans and deep-frying

- Don't fill the pan more than a third full of oil.
- If the oil starts to smoke or boil, don't put food in – leave the pan to cool.
- Make sure the food you put in is dry.
- Never pour water on a chip-pan fire – it will make the oil explode and cause flames.
- Turn the cooker off, get out and call 999.



## Cooking

The kitchen is probably the most dangerous room in the house, even if you don't have a deep-fryer.

- Never leave a saucepan on the heat if you get called away.
- Don't let flexes go near the top of the cooker.
- Keep the top of the cooker clean.
- Keep the toaster away from curtains and wires, and clean it out regularly.



Advice:

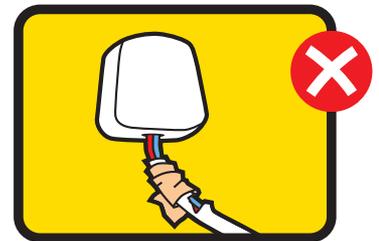
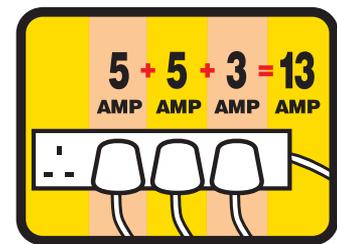
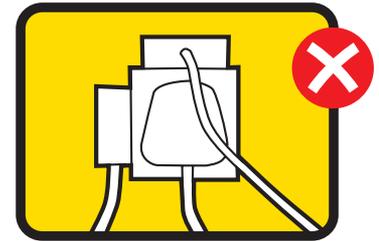
## Heaters and fires

- Always position heaters at least one metre (three feet) away from clothes which are drying and other fabric furnishings.
- Don't put anything on top of heaters.
- Don't put a portable heater where it can be knocked over.



## Electrics

- Be careful not to overload sockets. Only use bar adaptors (see picture opposite), and don't plug an adaptor into an adaptor.
- Turn electrical appliances off at the wall when you're not using them, unless they are designed to be left on like freezers or VCRs.
- Don't mend cables with insulating tape.



# What you should do

## Fit a smoke alarm

**A smoke alarm is a warning device that detects smoke at the earliest stages of a fire. This gives you vital extra time to escape. Smoke alarms cost as little as £5 and you can get them from supermarkets and in high-street stores.**

- Fit a smoke alarm where you can hear it throughout your home, ideally on the hallway or landing ceilings.
- Don't put a smoke alarm in the kitchen where it can be set off accidentally.
- You must maintain your smoke alarms.



Advice:

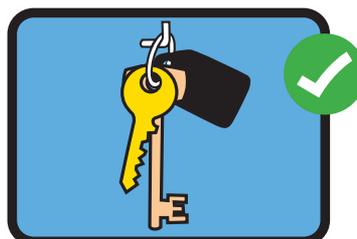
## Make an escape plan

- Spend a few minutes thinking about how you'd get out if there was a fire. What would you do if your main escape route was blocked? Would everyone know what to do? Make sure you know the basic procedure for surviving a fire.
- It might be an idea to pin up the basic plan on the wall, especially if people often drop in or come to stay.



## Know where the keys are kept

- You need to be able to find the door or window keys in a hurry. Agree with everyone you live with where they are going to be kept, and keep them there.



Advice:

Advice:

## Keep your escape route clear

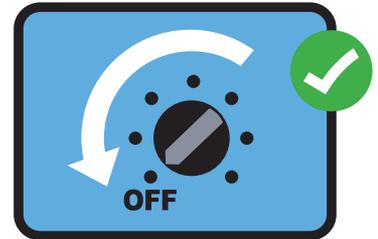
- The best escape route is your normal way in and out of your home.
- Choose a second escape route, in case the first one is blocked by fire.
- Keep both routes clear of obstructions.



## Do a check before bed

Last thing at night – you are far more likely to be killed or injured in a fire during the night – get used to checking your home before you go to bed.

- Turn off and unplug all electrical appliances unless they are designed to be left on – like your freezer or VCR for example .
- Don't leave the washing machine on.
- Turn heaters off and put up fire guards.
- Put out candles and cigarettes properly.
- Close inside doors.
- Check the cooker is turned off.



## Check your furniture

- Check the label. If your furniture was made before 1988, it won't be heat-resistant.
- It can be set alight easily and produces clouds of toxic smoke. Buy furniture which has the fire-resistant permanent label like this one.



# Home Fire Risk Assessment

Station area

Date

Homeowner's name:

Address:

Postcode:

Phone:

Age:

16 to 25

26 to 35

36 to 50

51 to 65

65 and over

Are they:

male?

female?

Type of property:

Detached

Semi-detached

Terraced

Bungalow

Mobile home

Other

## Smoke alarms

1 Are there smoke alarms already fitted?

Yes No 

2 Have you offered and fitted a smoke alarm on this visit?

Yes No 

3 Has the person refused the smoke alarm?

Yes No 

## Number in household

Total number of people in household

Number under age 5

Number of 5- to 11-year-olds

Number of 12- to 16-year-olds

Number over 65 years old

Is this a shared household?

## Carry out Home Fire Risk Assessment

When you have done the assessment, cover the following fire safety points with the homeowner.

	Advice given	Does not apply
1 Using smoke alarms in the home.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 Regular testing of smoke alarms. (Test it!)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 Escape plan.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 Calling the fire brigade.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 Young children – safety from fire and fire-lighting materials.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 Safety of elderly people and people with disabilities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7 Smoking in the home.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8 Cooking facilities – chip-pan and grill-pan fires.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9 Bedtime routine – checks and closing doors.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10 Using candles, oil burners and paraffin heaters.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11 Reasons for electrical fires.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### After the Home Fire Risk Assessment (Tick an appropriate box.)

1 The assessment was satisfactory

2 The assessment was refused

(Why was it refused?)

3 The assessment shows a high risk

(Action taken or to take)

**Kitchen**

	Yes	No	Advice given
1 If a chip pan is used, is it under one-third full?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 Does the person know how to put out a chip-pan fire? Ask! (Tell children and elderly people to 'Get Out, Call the Fire Brigade Out and Stay Out')	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 Are pan handles turned in and clear of hotplates?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 Are towels kept clear of the cooker?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 Are all flexes and cables on electrical appliances in good condition?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 Are flexes kept away from hotplates?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7 Are plugs and sockets being used correctly and not overloaded?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8 Is the toaster under a wall-mounted unit?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9 Are matches and other sources of ignition out of reach of children?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10 Are floor coverings free of anything which could cause people to trip?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11 Does the door close fully into the door frame?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Living and dining room**

1 Is there a mirror above the fireplace? (Explain the dangers involved.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 Are there any clothes, furnishings or furniture too close to a fire or heater?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 Are any guards provided?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 For open fires, are chimneys swept regularly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 Are all electrical appliances which are not being used unplugged, if this is practical?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 Are all flexes and cables on electrical appliances in good condition?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7 Do cables and flexes run under carpets or floor coverings?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8 Are plugs and sockets being used correctly and not overloaded?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9 Are floor coverings free of anything which could cause people to trip?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10 Does the door close fully into the door frame?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Bathroom**

1 Are aerosol cans too close to a source of heat?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 Are lights and heaters controlled by a pull-cord switch?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 Are portable heaters kept away from the bathroom?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 Are other electrical appliances used in the bathroom?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 Are floor coverings free of anything which could cause people to trip?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Airing cupboard**

1 Is storage being carried out safely?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 Is the immersion-heater cable in good condition?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 Does the door close fully into the door frame?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Bedrooms**

	Yes	No	Advice given
1 Is the homeowner aware of the dangers of smoking in bed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 Are electric blankets in good condition?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 Are electric blankets stored with few folds and nothing on top?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 Do electric blankets have British Standard Kitemarks, and BEABs, on them?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 Are all flexes and cables on electrical appliances in good condition?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 Are plugs and sockets being used correctly and not overloaded?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7 Can the homeowner get in and out satisfactorily?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8 Are floor coverings free of anything which could cause people to trip?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9 Does the door close fully into the door frame?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10 If windows are double glazed, is there a window which can be opened and used as an escape route in an emergency?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Hall, stairs and landing**

1 Are plugs and sockets being used correctly and not overloaded?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 Are all flexes and cables on electrical appliances in good condition?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 Are exit routes clear of obstructions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 Are floor coverings free of anything which could cause people to trip?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

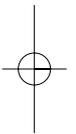
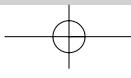
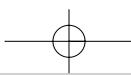
**Loft (Ask the homeowner the following)**

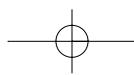
1 Is there access to the loft?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 Is the loft free of storage material which could catch fire?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 Are the electrics in good order?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 Is the loft self-contained and no threat to the property next door?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 Does the loft access door close fully into the frame?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Garage and storage outside**

1 Are all dangerous or flammable materials stored safely and correctly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 Are there clear routes in and out of the area?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 If the door to the house is direct from the garage, is it a fire door?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 Does the door close fully into the door frame?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>







## Regular checks and maintenance

- Every week:** – test your smoke-alarm battery.
- Every year:** – change your smoke-alarm battery; and  
– service your boiler.
- Every 10 years:** – service any major electrical appliances; and  
– change your smoke alarm.

Advice:

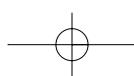
## In a fire

- Keep calm and act quickly! Alert everyone in your home. Don't delay – get everyone out!
- Don't waste time investigating or rescuing valuables.
- Before you open a door, check it with the back of your hand. If it's warm, don't open it – fire is on the other side. Remember to shut doors behind you.
- 'Keep low' where the air is clearer.
- Remember – use the stairs if you can, but never use lifts in a fire!
- Don't go back in – call 999 and wait outside for the Fire and Rescue Service. Don't call the local fire station's number – it may take longer.



**If there's a fire...**

**Get Out  
Stay Out  
and Call  
999**



Advice:

## If escape routes are blocked

- If you're on the ground or first floor, escape out of a window – use bedding to cushion your fall and lower yourself slowly, don't jump! If you need to break a window, use a heavy object to break the glass in the bottom corner. Then knock out the glass. Be careful of jagged edges and make them safe with a towel or blanket.
- If escaping out of a window is not an option, get everyone into a room – ideally one with a phone and a window that opens. Put cushions and bedding round the bottom of the door to block smoke and close any ventilators. Open the window to attract help and phone 999, letting them know your address and which room you are in. If the door becomes hot and you have access to water, wet it down.



## If your clothes catch fire

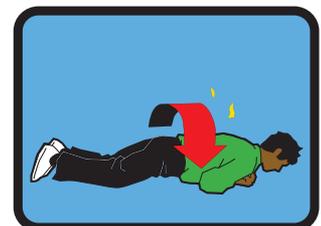
- Don't run around. You'll fan the flames and make them burn faster.
- Lie down and roll around. It makes it harder for the fire to spread.
- Smother the flames with a heavy material, like a coat, blanket or a fire blanket.



**Stop!**



**Drop!**



**Roll!**

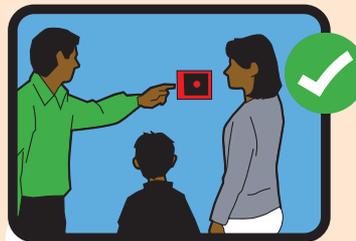
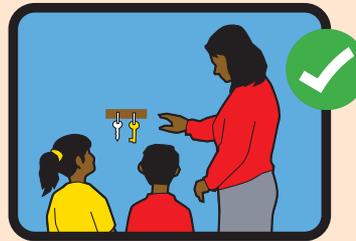
## Special advice for parents and child carers

You know how much your children mean to you. You would do anything to keep them safe. Yet every year children die in fires. Read on to find out what you can do to make sure your children are never affected by fire.

### Make your home fire-safe for children

It's crucial to be aware that children can start a fire in moments – but only if they can get hold of materials that can start fire.

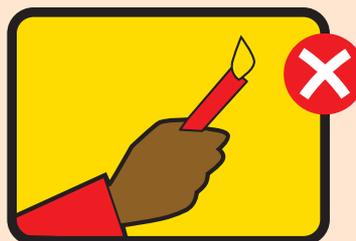
- Keep matches and lighters out of reach (and out of sight) of children.
- Position lighted candles out of reach of children and pets.
- Put a childproof fireguard in front of an open fire or heater if there are children in the house.
- Don't let children play or leave toys near a fire or heater.
- Put child locks on cupboards that have anything in them that children could use to start a fire.
- Unplug appliances that children could trip over.
- Keep portable heaters in a safe place, both when they're being used and when they're being stored.
- Put plug guards into sockets so children can't stick things into the holes.
- Keep your escape route clear of toys and other obstructions.
- Don't leave children alone in the home.



Advice:

### Playing with fire

- It's natural for children to be drawn to the warmth and light of fire. But every year homes and property are destroyed in fires started accidentally and deliberately by children. Arson by young people is a serious problem.



Advice:

## Teach children about the dangers of fire

- You should tell children about how destructive fire can be and how rapidly it can spread. Older children may know that fire is dangerous, but might not realise how uncontrollable it can become, or that breathing toxic smoke can quickly make you lose consciousness.

## Teach them how to be safe with fire

- Encourage children to tell you if they find matches or lighters. Let them see you being careful about fire risks.
- Older children can take part in safe activities with fire, like lighting a bonfire or a candle while supervised by an adult.
- Older teenagers need to be told clearly about the risks of fire from smoking. Even if they don't smoke, they may go to parties with people who do.



## Let them know the dangers of hoax calls

- Hoax calls to the fire brigade put lives in danger. You must tell children that it is completely wrong to call 999 for fun.

## If they seem fascinated...

Some children can become dangerously obsessed with fires. If you know children who you think may be lighting fires deliberately, you need to do something about it.

- Children can play with fire for reasons other than curiosity – for example, to get attention or because of peer pressure.
- Call your local fire service for help and advice on how to deal with the problem.
- Some fire brigades offer a confidential service where a specially trained fire adviser visits you and your child at home to give advice and education. These services are safe and gentle, using discussion, videos, projects, and so on.
- Parents or guardians have a legal responsibility for any illegal actions carried out by children.

## Special advice for renters and sharers

**The problem with renting (and the advantage) is that it's not your home. Someone else has to maintain it. But it's a mistake to leave it all to the landlord. You're the person living there, and it's your life. And the legal obligation is generally on the person renting.**

### Ask your landlord

Here is a list of the things you can ask your landlord. But remember that if your landlord hasn't carried out the following checks, you may not be able to force him or her to do so. If you are having problems, contact a citizens advice bureau or your local council for more advice.



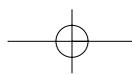
- Has your landlord arranged an electrical installation safety check recently?
- Do they look around and check sockets, switches, lamp holders, and so on, every year?
- Is there a regular maintenance programme for gas heaters and appliances?
- Are the chimneys and flues cleaned regularly?
- Has the landlord registered the house with the local authority as being 'in multiple occupation'?

### The landlord's obligations

- The 1985 Housing Act means your landlord must do several things about fire safety.
- There has to be an adequate route of escape and, depending on the size of the property, there may have to be smoke alarms and fire-extinguishing equipment.
- If you feel your landlord hasn't kept to the Housing Act or if you need more information about it, contact the local Environmental Health Officer – part of the local council. The Environmental Health Officer can force your landlord to provide adequate fire precautions.



Advice:



## GET SMART!

Information that could save your life.

## GET EQUIPPED!

Investing in your own safety.

## GET OUT!

Make a plan. Be prepared.

This is one of a series of leaflets in the 'Get Smart! Get Equipped! Get Out!' fire-safety range available from your local Fire and Rescue Service. Other leaflets in the series provide advice on fire-safety equipment, fire safety for parents and children, and extra information for those with eyesight problems or problems getting around. Translations and alternative formats are also available.

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