
Fire safety

in the home



**FIRE
KILLS**

**YOU CAN
PREVENT IT**

PROTECT YOUR HOME FROM FIRE

Fire safety – the essentials

Too busy to think about fire safety?

Ask anyone who's suffered a house fire if fire safety's a waste of time and they'll tell a different story.

Keep your home and family safe from fire.

Read this leaflet and use the 'home check' section to remind yourself of the fire safety basics.

Real life – excuses kill



On 21 August 2001 there was a fire in the home of the Graham family. The family were asleep. Anne and Michael Graham got out alive. Their two children, Amy (age three) and Josh (age five), didn't. The Graham family had thought about fire safety. They'd fitted smoke alarms in the downstairs and upstairs landings, but they didn't check the batteries.



Have you tested your smoke alarm batteries recently?

SMOKE ALARMS

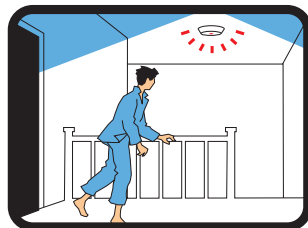
A smoke alarm is a warning device that detects smoke at the earliest stages of a fire. This gives you vital extra time to escape.



- Smoke alarms cost as little as £5 and you can get them from supermarkets and in high-street stores.

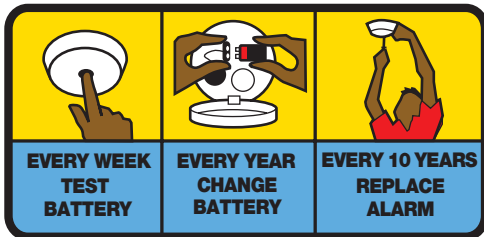


- Fit a smoke alarm on every floor of your home, ideally on the hallway or landing ceilings. Don't put a smoke alarm in the kitchen where it can be set off accidentally.



- You can buy smoke alarms fitted with a 'hush button' so you can silence the alarm if it goes off by mistake.

- Always test the batteries once a week. Alarms are also available with 10-year batteries.

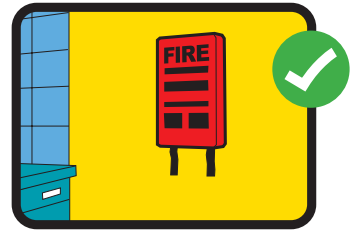


It's vital to maintain your smoke alarms.

KITCHEN SAFETY

- Keep electrical leads and items which can catch fire easily, such as tea towels, oven gloves and loose clothing, away from the cooker and toaster.
 - Keep the oven, toaster, hob and grill clean. A build-up of crumbs, fat and grease can easily catch fire.
 - Keep electrical leads and appliances away from water.
-

- Why not keep a fire blanket in the kitchen? You can use it to wrap around someone whose clothes have caught fire or to smother a small fire.



Don't leave cooking unattended.

Fire starts when your attention stops.

- If you deep-fry food, dry it before you put it in the hot oil. If the oil starts to smoke, turn off the heat and leave the pan to cool.
-

- Never fill chip pans more than one-third full of oil.
-



- Don't use matches or lighters to light gas cookers. Spark devices are safer.
- Make sure saucepan handles don't stick out from the hob.

What if a pan catches fire?

You should only ever tackle a pan fire if it's in its early stages and you're completely sure you can put it out and stay safe.

- Turn off the heat if it's safe to do so. Don't move the pan.

- Run a cloth under the tap, wring it out carefully, and cover the flaming pan. If you have a fire blanket, put it over the pan.



- Never throw water over the pan.

IF THERE'S A FIRE... **Get Out
Stay Out
and call
999**



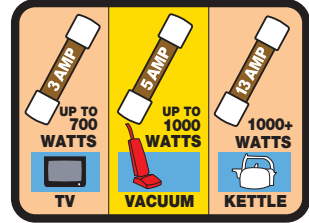
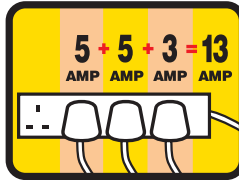
Don't take risks

There is no such thing as a safe fire. It's better for you to prevent fire than to fight it.
Tackling fire is a job best left to professional firefighters.

ELECTRICS

Plugs and cables

- Check the maximum amps that the fuse in the plug can handle.



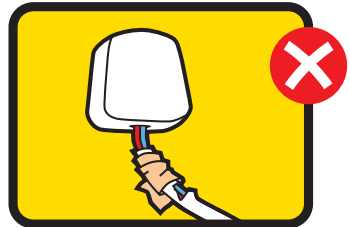
- If you have to use an adaptor, use one which has a fuse and keep the total output to no more than 13 amps. Watch out! A single kettle uses 13 amps alone.

- Don't put cables under carpets or mats.
- Check for signs of loose wiring and faulty plugs or sockets, such as scorch marks or flickering lights.

- Replace any worn or taped-up cables and leads.



Unplug electrical appliances if you are not using them.

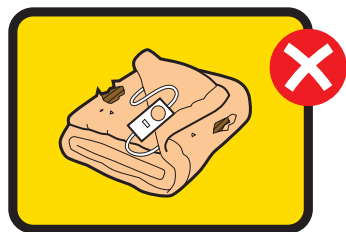


- Don't overload sockets – use one plug in each socket.



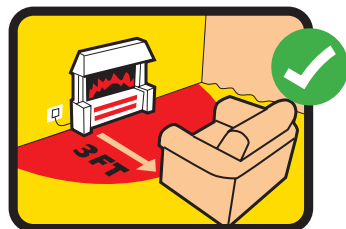
Electric blankets

- Don't leave blankets folded. Store them flat or rolled up to protect the internal wiring.
- Only leave a blanket switched on all night if it has thermostatic controls for safe all-night use. Otherwise, unplug it before you get into bed.



Portable heaters

- Always position heaters so they are backed up against a wall, facing into the room. If possible, secure them to the wall to stop them falling over.
- Don't place heaters near curtains or furnishings and never use them for drying clothes.



Lights

- Don't position lights and bulbs near curtains and other fabrics.



Check that your furniture has the fire-resistant permanent label.



RESISTANT

CIGARETTES

Every three days someone dies from a fire caused by a cigarette.

- Take extra care smoking if you're drowsy, taking prescription drugs or if you have been drinking. It's too easy to fall asleep and not notice that a cigarette is still burning.
- Don't smoke in bed. It's too easy to fall asleep and set bedding on fire.

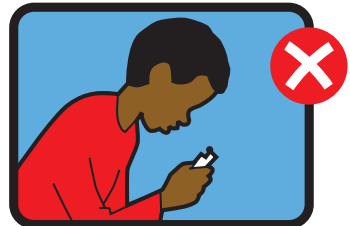


It's hotter than you think – cigarettes can burn at temperatures of over 700°C.

- Always use proper ashtrays.
- Make sure when you put out a cigarette, it is really out.



- Take responsibility and keep matches and lighters out of reach of children.



CANDLES

Treat lighted candles as you would any other flame.

- Don't leave them unattended.
- Put them out completely at night.



-
- Keep candles away from anything that can catch fire, like furnishings, fabrics, curtains and so on.



-
- Candles and tea lights can melt plastic surfaces like the tops of televisions and bath tubs. Make sure you always place them on a heat resistant surface.



It only takes a moment's distraction for a fire to start – Keep candles out of reach of children and pets.

BE PREPARED – plan ahead

- Make sure all your family know what to do in a fire and how to escape safely.
- Plan your escape routes and keep your exits clear.
- Keep door and window keys handy.



What to do if a fire starts

- If there is smoke, keep low where the air is clearer.
- Try and keep calm. Get everyone out as quickly as possible – don't waste time investigating or rescuing valuables.



If your clothes catch fire...

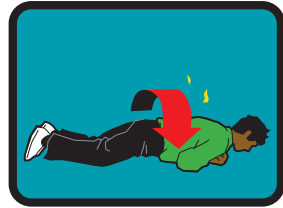
- Don't run around.
- Lie down and roll around.
- Smother the flames with a heavy material, like a coat, blanket or a fire blanket if there is one near.



STOP!



DROP!



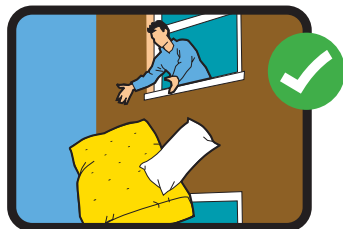
ROLL!

If escape routes are blocked...

- If you can't open the window – break the glass in the bottom corner. Make jagged edges safe with a towel or blanket.



- If you're on the ground or first floor, go out of a window. Use bedding to cushion your fall and lower yourself. Don't jump!



- If you can't get out, get everyone into one room, preferably with a window and a phone. Put bedding round the door to block smoke.



- Call 999 as soon as you are clear of the building. Use a mobile or a neighbour's phone.



Don't go back inside for any reason.
Wait outside for the fire brigade.

Home check

You can prevent most fires in the home. Use the home check list below to think about fire safety in your own home. **Keep it handy** as a reminder of the basics. It may seem like common sense, but it could save your life.



Household basics

Don't wait until later! If you do spot a problem, put it right now.

Smoke alarms

Have you fitted a smoke alarm on every floor?



Have you tested the batteries in the last week?

Have you replaced the batteries in the last year?

Electrics

Have you got just one plug in each wall socket?

If you have to use an adaptor, do the appliances running off it use less than 13 amps in total?

Are your fuses the correct rating for your appliances?

Have you replaced any loose or taped-up cables and leads?

Do any plugs or sockets have scorch marks?

Kitchen essentials

Are your cooker, toaster and grill pans clean?

Do you keep electrical leads or flammable materials, such as tea towels or cloths, away from the cooker or toaster?

General risks

Have you checked that lights aren't near curtains and other materials that can catch fire easily?

Do you keep matches or lighters out of children's reach?

Does all your upholstered furniture have a fire-resistant label?



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.

- Switch off and unplug electrical appliances you are not using.
- Check the cooker is turned off.
- Don't leave the washing machine on.
- Turn heaters off and put up fire guards.
- Put out candles and cigarettes properly.
- Close inside doors.

Regular checks and maintenance

Every week: - test your smoke alarm battery.

Every year: - change your smoke alarm battery;
- service your boiler; and
- service any major electrical appliances.

Every 10 years: - change your smoke alarm.





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 brigade. 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.

Published by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.
©Crown copyright 2003. Printed in the UK, April 2003,
on material containing 75% post-consumer waste
and 25% ECF pulp (03DOC01123)

Product code: Fire main 03



For further information visit our website at: www.firekills.gov.uk