

# Fire safety in your home

Your safety is our top priority and we do all we can to make sure you and your family are safe. However, there are things **you** can also do to reduce the chances of a fire starting and spreading in your home.

## Essential fire safety tips

- ▶ Test all smoke alarms regularly.
- ▶ Dispose of rubbish and cigarettes properly.
- ▶ Do not store anything on balconies or in communal areas where it can provide fuel for a fire, create an obstruction or cause someone to trip.
- ▶ Take care when cooking with oil and never leave cooking unattended.
- ▶ Take special care with candles and incense burners. Always use holders and keep them well away from curtains and fabrics.
- ▶ Make sure you have an escape plan.



## Smoke alarms

Working smoke alarms could save your life by providing an early warning and extra time to escape if there is a fire. You should regularly check that the smoke alarms in your home are working and change the batteries when necessary. Vacuuming your smoke alarms will remove dust and dirt that can stop them from working. If you don't have smoke alarms installed, or if you can't get them to work, please contact us.

## Smoking

Smoking causes more deaths by fire than anything else. Make sure you put cigarettes out fully and dispose of them correctly – don't throw them on the floor or out of the window.

## Fire safety in the kitchen

Most fires start in the kitchen, so make sure yours is safe.

- ▶ A major cause of fire is the build-up of fat and oil in pans, as it can easily ignite when heated. Clean your pans regularly.
- ▶ Never use water on an oil pan fire. Water reacts with the oil and will cause a fireball.

- ▶ If a pan catches fire do not attempt to move it. Only turn off the heat if it is safe to do so.
- ▶ Do not leave cooking unattended. Take pans off the heat or turn the heat down if you're called away from the cooker.

## Preventing electrical fires

- ▶ Make sure electrical appliances have a British or European safety mark when you buy them.
- ▶ Try and keep to one plug per socket, especially for high-powered appliances like washing machines and freezers.
- ▶ Don't overload freezers or fridge freezers, especially older models.
- ▶ Electrical leads should not be run under carpets as any damage will go unseen.
- ▶ Unplug appliances when you're not using them or at night to help to reduce the risk of fire.
- ▶ Don't leave mobile phones charging overnight, especially on your bed or under your pillow. Batteries can overheat and catch fire.
- ▶ Regularly remove the fluff from tumble dryers.
- ▶ If you use a portable heater, use an oil filled one instead of a halogen, bar or convector heater.
- ▶ Always keep heaters well away from clothes, curtains and furniture.

## **Rubbish: remove and report it**

Last year thousands of fires across the country were caused by rubbish. They start easily, and a large number of them are deliberate. Dumped furniture, car tyres, scraps of wood, old mattresses and cardboard boxes look bad but are also potential fire hazards and a target for arsonists.

- ▶ Keep rubbish away from buildings, doors and windows.
- ▶ Keep exits and escape routes clear of rubbish.

## **Keep shared areas clear**

- ▶ Items left in shared areas or corridors can act as fuel for a fire – this includes doormats. Please remove them and don't leave anything, like bikes and buggies, in corridors or communal areas where they can cause an obstruction.
- ▶ If you see anything obstructing a shared area, please report it by contacting the Hastoe Hub on **0300 123 2250**.

## **WARNING: removal of property**

If our staff see any items in shared areas that could present a serious fire hazard they may remove them without notice and charge you for the cost of removal.

## **Make a fire escape plan**

Being prepared for a fire can save lives.

With everyone in your household:

- ▶ Plan what you would do if there was a fire in your home.
- ▶ Agree your escape route out of the building.
- ▶ Make sure you all know where the keys to the front door and windows are kept.
- ▶ Learn how to navigate the stairs in darkness so you could do the same in thick smoke.
- ▶ Keep your escape route clear of obstacles.



# **WHAT TO DO IN THE EVENT OF A FIRE**



## **Call 999**

Call the emergency services as soon as it is safe to do so. Do not try to tackle the fire yourself as it could put you and others in danger. The sooner you call 999, the sooner the fire brigade will be sent to deal with the fire.

## **Fire inside your home**

Try to stay calm and, if you can, close all doors to prevent smoke and fire spreading. Unless you live in a block and have been told by the fire brigade to 'stay put', you should get out and stay out. Do not waste time rescuing valuables. Alert your neighbours and do not return to your home until the fire brigade tells you it is safe.

## **Smoke**

If there is a lot of smoke, stay low. Crawl along the floor where there is less smoke and the air will be cleaner.

## **Do not use lifts**

Use the stairs. If you live in a block, make your way out using the emergency exit staircase. During fires, lifts are dangerous because you may become trapped inside.