



CORNWALL
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE
A service of Cornwall Council

Fire safety in the home

Information about how to protect your
home and yourself from fire



Did you know...?

- You're **four times more likely to die** in a fire if you don't have a smoke alarm that works.
- Around **half of all fires in the home** are caused by cooking accidents.
- Two fires a day are started **by candles.**
- Every six days someone dies from **a fire caused by a cigarette.**
- About two fires a day **are started by heaters.**
- Faulty electrics (appliances, wiring and overloaded sockets) **cause around 6,000 fires in the home** across the country every year.

Protect your home with smoke alarms

The easiest way to protect your home and family from fire is with working smoke alarms.

Choosing your smoke alarms

- Fit at least **one smoke alarm** on **every level of your home**.
- Smoke alarms are **cheap** and **easy** to install.
- They are available from **DIY stores, electrical shops** and **most high street supermarkets**.
- There are **a variety of different models** to choose from. Your local fire and rescue service **will be happy to give you advice** on which one is best suited for you.
- **Ten-year sealed battery smoke alarms are the best option.** They are slightly more expensive, but you save on the cost of replacing batteries.



Look out for **one of these symbols**, which shows the alarm is approved and safe.



British Standard
Kitemark



Top tip



Fit smoke alarms

How to make sure your smoke alarms work

- If any of your smoke alarms have a one year battery, make sure it is changed every year. **Only take the battery out when you need to replace it.**
- **Never disconnect or take the batteries out of your alarm** if it goes off by mistake.
- Standard battery operated alarms are the cheapest option, but **the batteries need to be replaced every year.**
- A lot of people forget to test the batteries, so **longer life batteries are better.**
- **Mains-powered alarms are powered by your home power supply.** They need to be installed by a qualified electrician, but like battery alarms, they do require testing.
- **Testing a smoke alarm tests the smoke sensor** as well as the power supply and/or battery.
- You can even **have linked alarms installed, so that when one alarm detects a fire they all go off together.** This is useful if you live in a large house or over several levels.

Top tip



Test your smoke alarms at least monthly

Strobe light and vibrating-pad alarms are available for **those who are deaf or hard of hearing.** Contact the Action on Hearing Loss Information Line on

 **0808 808 0123**

or textphone

 **0808 808 9000.**

Fitting your smoke alarms

- **Don't put alarms** in or near kitchens or bathrooms where smoke or steam can set them off by accident.
- **If it is difficult for you to fit smoke alarms yourself** contact your local fire and rescue service for help. They'll be happy to install them for you.



The ideal position is on the ceiling, in the middle of a room, and on the hallway and landing, so you can hear an alarm throughout your home.



Looking after your smoke alarms

- Make testing your smoke alarms part of your **regular household routine**.
- If a smoke alarm starts to beep on a regular basis, you need to **replace the battery immediately**.
- If it is a ten year alarm, **you will need to replace the whole alarm** every ten years.

Other equipment you could consider

- **Fire blankets** are used to **put out a fire or wrap a person whose clothes are on fire**. They are best kept in the kitchen.
- **Fire extinguishers shoot out a jet to help control a fire**. They are quick and simple to use, but always read the instructions first.
- **Heat alarms can detect fires in kitchens** where smoke alarms should not be placed.

How to prevent common fires in the home

This section will tell you how you can avoid fires in your home, including how to **cook safely** and take care with **electrics, heaters, candles and cigarettes**.

In the kitchen

Cook safely

- Avoid cooking when **under the influence of alcohol**.
- **Avoid leaving children in the kitchen alone when cooking on the hob.** Keep matches and saucepan handles out of their reach to keep them safe.
- **Make sure saucepan handles don't stick out** – so they don't get knocked off the stove.
- **Take care if you're wearing loose clothing** – they can easily catch fire.
- **Keep tea towels and cloths away from the cooker and hob.**
- **Spark devices are safer than matches or lighters to light gas cookers**, because they don't have a naked flame.
- **Double check the cooker is off** when you've finished cooking.

Top tip

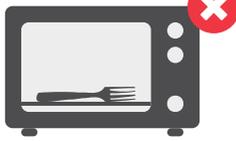


Take extra care if you need to leave the kitchen whilst cooking, take pans off the heat or turn them down to avoid risk.

Take care with electrics

- **Keep electrics** (leads and appliances) **away from water.**
- Check toasters are clean **and placed away from curtains and kitchen rolls.**
- **Keep the oven, hob and grill clean and in good working order.** A build up of fat and grease can ignite a fire.

Don't put anything metal in the microwave



Deep fat frying

- Take care when cooking with hot oil – it sets alight easily.
- **Make sure food is dry before putting it in hot oil** so it doesn't splash.
- **If the oil starts to smoke** – it's too hot. Turn off the heat and leave it to cool.
- **Use a thermostat controlled electric deep fat fryer.** They can't overheat.

What to do if a pan catches fire

- Don't take any risks. Turn off the heat if it's safe to do so. Never throw water over it.
- **Don't tackle the fire yourself.**



Electrics

How to avoid electrical fires

- Always check that **you use the right fuse** to prevent overheating.
- **Make sure an electrical appliance has a British or European safety mark when you buy it.**
- Certain appliances, such as washing machines, **should have a single plug to themselves**, as they are high powered.
- **Try and keep to one plug per socket.**
- When charging electrical goods, **follow the manufacturer's instructions and look for the CE mark** that indicates chargers comply with European safety standards.
- Keep your eyes peeled for **signs of dangerous** or **loose wiring** such as scorch marks, hot plugs and sockets, fuses that blow or circuit-breakers that trip for no obvious reasons, or flickering lights.
- **Check and replace any old cables and leads**, especially if they are hidden from view – behind furniture or under carpets and mats.
- **Unplug appliances** when you're not using them or when you go to bed.

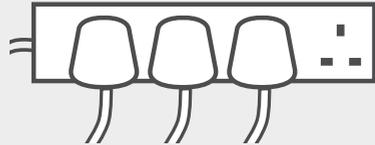
An extension lead or adaptor will have a **limit to how many amps it can take**, so be careful not to overload them to reduce the risk of a fire.



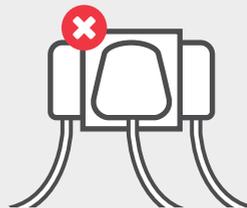
Appliances use different amounts of power – a television may use a 3amp plug and a vacuum cleaner a 5amp plug for example.

Know the limit!

$$\begin{array}{cccc} 5 & + & 5 & + & 3 & = & 13 \\ \text{AMP} & & \text{AMP} & & \text{AMP} & & \text{AMP} \end{array}$$



Top tip



Don't overload

Furniture

- **Always ensure that your furniture** has the fire-resistant permanent label.

Portable heaters

- **Try to secure heaters up against a wall** to stop them falling over.
- **Keep them clear from curtains and furniture** and never use them for drying clothes.

Using an electric blanket

- **Store electric blankets flat, rolled up or loosely folded** to prevent damaging the internal wiring.
- **Unplug blankets before you get into bed**, unless it has a thermostat control for safe all-night use.
- **Try not to buy second hand blankets** and check regularly for wear and tear.
- **Always follow the manufacturer's instructions.**



Keep electrical appliances clean and in good working order to prevent them triggering a fire.

Top tip



Look out for fire-resistant label when choosing furniture

Cigarettes



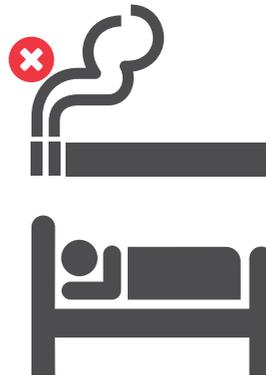
Stub cigarettes out properly and dispose of them carefully. Put them out. Right out!

- Use a proper ashtray – never a waste paper basket.
- Make sure your ashtray can't tip over and is made of a material that won't burn.
- Don't leave a lit cigarette, cigar or pipe lying around. They can easily fall over and start a fire.
- Take extra care if you smoke when you're tired, taking prescription drugs, or if you've been drinking. You might fall asleep and set your bed or sofa on fire.
- Keep matches and lighters out of reach of children.
- Consider buying child resistant lighters and match boxes.

Top tip



Put them out. Right out!



Alcohol



Alcohol can affect your ability to respond appropriately to a fire.

- Being affected by alcohol means **you are likely to respond less quickly to a smoke alarm.**
- When under the influence of alcohol **fires are three times as likely to be fatal** and **four times as likely to cause serious injury.**
- **Never attempt to cook** when under the influence of alcohol.

Candles



Make sure candles are secured in a proper holder and away from materials that may catch fire – like curtains.

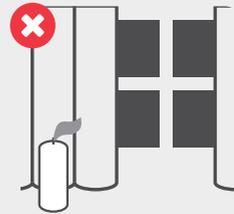
- **Put candles out** when you leave the room, and make sure they're put out completely at night.
- Children **shouldn't be left alone with lit candles.**
- **Keep pets away** from lit candles.

Top tip

If you want support with making lifestyle changes such as stopping smoking or weight management, you can find advice, events and support from Healthy Cornwall website.

 www.healthycornwall.org.uk

Top tip



Be careful with candles

Carbon monoxide

This section will tell you about the dangers of carbon monoxide, the symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning and how to prevent it.

The dangers of carbon monoxide

What is carbon monoxide?

- **Carbon monoxide (CO)** is a **colourless, odourless, tasteless, poisonous gas** produced by incomplete burning of carbon based fuels including gas, oil, wood and coal.
- Sources can include **cookers, heaters and fire places.**
- **CO poisoning kills 40 people and injures a further 300 every year** in the UK.
- You **can't see it, taste it or smell it**, but **CO can kill quickly** without warning.

What are the symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning?

- The most common symptoms include **headaches, dizziness, tiredness and nausea.**
- Symptoms **can be mistaken** for flu, viruses or even food poisoning.

- If someone suffers from these symptoms whilst at home but is fine elsewhere, **they may be suffering from CO poisoning.**

How to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning

- Make sure all appliances are **installed and maintained by a professional.**
- Keep chimney flues **free from blockages.**
- Ensure your home **has enough ventilation** and **airbricks are not blocked.**
- Protect your family from this silent killer **by fitting a CO alarm** approved to BS EN 50291.



You **can't see it, taste it or smell it**, but **CO can kill quickly** without warning!

What to do if your carbon monoxide alarm sounds or you suspect a leak

- **Stop using all appliances, switch them off,** and **open doors** and **windows** to ventilate the property.
- **Evacuate the property immediately** – stay calm.
- **Call the gas emergency number** 0800 111 999 to report the incident, or Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Gas Safety Advice Line 0800 300 363.
- **Seek immediate medical help** and advice if you think you've been exposed.
- **Go immediately to your local accident and emergency department (A&E)** if you are feeling unwell after being exposed to carbon monoxide.
- **Never go back into the property** – wait for advice from the emergency services.

CO poisoning kills



40 people
and **injures** further
300 every
in the UK

The symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning...



Headaches



Dizziness



Nausea

Tiredness



What to do if there is a fire

This section will tell you about how to plan an escape route at home and what to do if there is a fire in your home.

Plan a safe escape

Fitting smoke alarms is the first crucial step to protecting yourself from fire. **But what would you do if one went off during the night?**

This section will help you make a plan ready for an emergency.

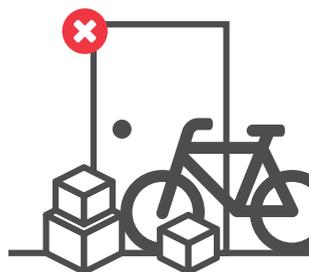
Be prepared by making a plan of escape

- **Plan an escape route** and make sure **everyone knows how to escape**.
- Make sure **exits are kept clear**.
- **The best route** is the normal way in and out of your home.
- Think of a **second route** in case the first one is blocked.
- Take a few minutes to **practise your escape plan**.
- **Review your plan** if the layout of your home changes.

Top tip



Plan an escape route



What to do if there is a fire



Don't tackle fires yourself. Leave it to the professionals.

- **Keep calm** and **act quickly**, get everyone out as soon as possible.
- **Don't waste time** investigating what's happened or rescuing valuables.
- If there's smoke, **keep low where the air is clearer**.
- **Before you open a door check if it's warm**. If it is, don't open it – fire is on the other side.
- **Call 999 as soon as you're clear of the building**. 999 calls are free.

What to do if your escape is blocked



If you can't get out, get everyone into one room, ideally with a window and a phone.

- Put bedding around the bottom of the door **to block out the smoke**.
- Call 999 then open the window and **shout "help fire"**.
- If you're on the ground or first floor, **you may be able to escape through a window**.

Top tip



Get out, stay out and call 999



How to escape from a high level building



As with all buildings, you should plan and practise an escape route.

- **Avoid using lifts and balconies** if there is a fire.
- **It is easy to get confused in smoke**, so count how many doors you need to go through to reach the stairs.
- **Check there is nothing in the corridors or stairways that could catch fire** - like boxes or rubbish.
- **Make sure doors to stairways are not locked.**
- **Make sure everyone in the building knows where the fire alarms are.**
- **You should still get a smoke alarm for your own home**, even if there is a warning system in the block.



What to do if your clothes catch fire



Don't run around, you'll make the flames worse.

- **Lie down and roll around.** It makes it harder for the fire to spread.
- **Smother the flames with a heavy material**, like a coat or blanket.
- **Remember: stop, drop and roll!**

Top tip



Stop!



Drop!



Roll!

Make a bedtime check

You are more at risk from a fire when asleep. So it's a good idea to check your home before you go to bed.

Check list

Close inside doors at night to stop fire from spreading.

Turn off and unplug electrical appliances unless they are designed to be left on - like your freezer.

Check your cooker is turned off.

Don't leave the washing machine on.

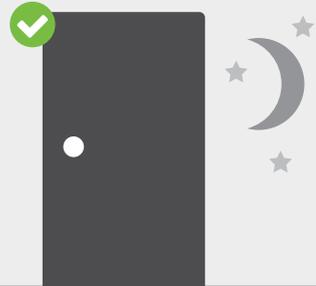
Turn heaters off and put up fireguards.

Put candles and cigarettes out properly.

Make sure exits are kept clear.

Keep **door and window keys** where everyone can find them.

Top tip



Close inside doors at night



Get out, stay out, call 999

Prepare

If there is a fire in your home, it will be much easier for you to escape if you have already thought about the best way to get out.



**Plan an
escape
route**

Escaping from high-rise/flats

1. Don't use lifts and balconies if there is a fire.
2. It's easy to get confused in smoke, so count how many doors you need to go through to reach the stairs.
3. Check that there is nothing in the stairways or corridors that could catch fire – like boxes or rubbish.

A bedtime routine

1. Make sure all electrical appliances are turned off.
2. Make sure your escape route is not blocked.
3. Make sure house keys are on your escape route.
4. Make sure internal doors are closed.

Prevention

1. Don't play with matches or lighters.
2. Don't stand or play too close to fires or heaters.
3. Don't overload electrical sockets and switch off all appliances when not in use.
4. Most house fires start in the kitchen, so be extra careful and don't play in there.
5. Candles are very hot and should not be touched or played with.

Get out, Stay Out, Call 999

If there is a fire

1. Think about the escape plan you made and get out of the house as quickly as possible.
2. Stay out. Don't go back inside for anything.
3. Once out of the house, call 999 and ask for the fire and rescue service.



Protect your property from arson

Many fires, including refuse fires and bin fires are started deliberately. Help to protect yourself and your family from the threat of arson by following the advice below.

- **Entry gates should be secured**, unless in use, to prevent intruders.
- **Ensure any damage to fencing is repaired** promptly to deter intruders.
- **Fit good quality external doors.**
- **Close windows** when not at home.
- **Sheds and garages should be well secured** as they often contain tools that can be used to force entry into the home.
- **Do not leave flammable liquids in the open**, ensure they are stored in an appropriate place in accordance with the guidance displayed on the container.
- **Look after your wheelie bin / external bin.** If possible place out on the morning of collection and return to your property as soon as possible after collection.
- **Avoid placing bins, rubbish or other combustible items** against the walls of the home. These are a ready supply of fuel to an arsonist.

Top tip



Sheds and garages should be well secured

Top tip



Look after your wheelie bin / external bin



Keeping people safe

Everyone has a right to live their life free from violence, fear and abuse and to be respected by other people.



If you're an adult experiencing abuse or neglect, or if you're concerned about an adult experiencing abuse or neglect, please don't stay silent.



Phone Adult Social Care on **0300 1234 131**.

In an emergency, always **dial 999**.

For police non-emergencies, **dial 101**.



Top tips

for staying warm and well this Winter

WINTER WELLBEING 

Reducing fuel poverty, improving health and progress to work

1 Keep warm and set your heating correctly



2 Have regular hot meals and hot drinks



3 Get financial help and advice



4 Insulate and draught proof your home

5 You could save money by switching tariffs

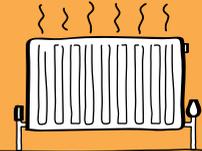


6 Check and service your heating systems and cooking appliances

7 Stay active and keep moving



8 Get your flu jab



9 Move towards work, volunteering and training ☎ 01872 355015

10 Look after yourself, check on friends, neighbours and wrap warm



11 Free home fire safety check ☎ 0800 358 1999



12 Drive safely ☎ 0300 123 4232

For help this Winter call **0800 954 1956**



Winter Wellbeing is a partnership of over 30 public, charitable and business organisations. Supported by DECC Central Heating Fund



FIRE

FireAngel
STEAD
7212101

Contacts

**To request a free home
fire safety check:**

Tel: 0800 3581 999

Fire Prevention & Road Safety:

Tel: 0300 1234 232

Domestic Abuse - ReaCH:

Tel: 0300 7774 777

Sexual Violence

- The Willow Centre:

Tel: 01872 272059

**Addaction (Drug and Alcohol
Community Service):**

Tel: 0333 2000 325

Drug and Alcohol Action Team:

Tel: 01726 223400

Winter Wellbeing:

Tel: 0800 9541 956

Stop Smoking Service:

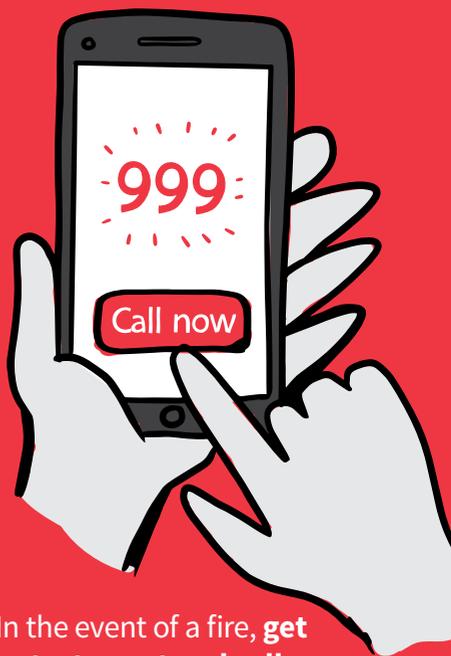
Tel: 01209 313419

**Trading Standards Doorstep
traders:**

Tel: 0300 1234 191

**Smokefree South West illegal
tobacco hotline:**

Tel: 0300 9990 000



In the event of a fire, **get out, stay out and call 999**. For further fire safety information contact your local fire and rescue service (not 999). Or visit **www.facebook.com/firekills**

Contact us

To request a free home fire safety check:

0800 3581 999



**FIRE
KILLS**
**YOU CAN
PREVENT IT**

**SAFER
CORNWALL**

Kernow Salwa

If you would like this information in another format or language please contact:

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Treyew Road, Truro, TR1 3AY

e: equality@cornwall.gov.uk

t: **0300 1234 100**