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# Fire safety

in the home



**FIRE  
KILLS**

**YOU CAN  
PREVENT IT**

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**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.**

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**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

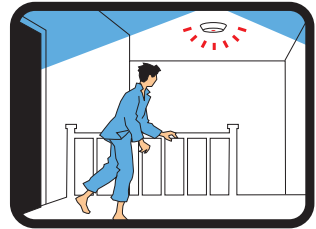
**A smoke alarm is a warning device that detects smoke at the earliest stages of a fire. This gives you vital extra time to escape.**



- Smoke alarms cost as little as £5 and you can get them from supermarkets and in high-street stores. If you are buying a smoke alarm, consider getting a 10 year alarm, which may cost a few pounds more but will not require frequent battery changes.

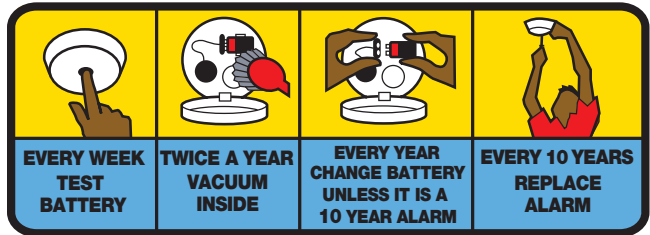


- Fit a smoke alarm on every floor of your home, ideally on the hallway or landing ceilings. Don't put a smoke alarm in the kitchen where it can be set off accidentally.



- 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.



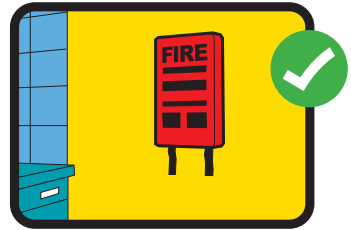
***It's vital to maintain your smoke alarms.***

# KITCHEN SAFETY

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- 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.
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- 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?

**Don't take risks. Get everyone out of your home and call the Fire and Rescue Service.**

- Turn off the heat if it's safe to do so. Don't move the pan.
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- Never throw water over the pan.



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

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### ***Don't take risks***

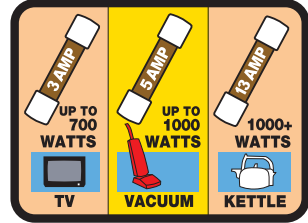
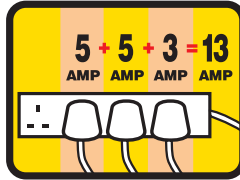
*There is no such thing as a safe fire. It's better for you to prevent fire than to fight it.*

***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.

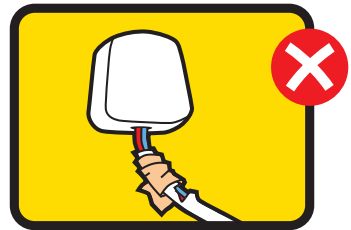


- If you have to use an adaptor, use one which has a fuse and keep the total output to no more than 13 amps. Watch out! A single kettle uses 13 amps alone.
- Don't put cables under carpets or mats.
- Check for signs of loose wiring and faulty plugs or sockets, such as scorch marks or flickering lights.

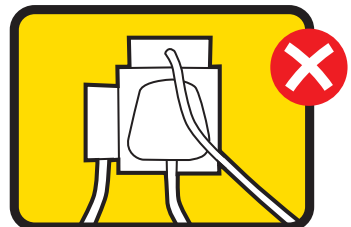
- Replace any worn or taped-up cables and leads.



***Unplug electrical appliances if you are not using them.***

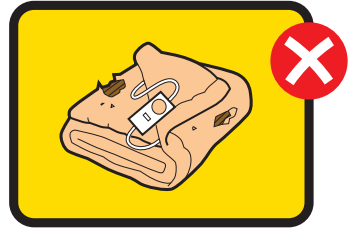


- Don't overload sockets – use one plug in each socket.



## 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.***



# CIGARETTES

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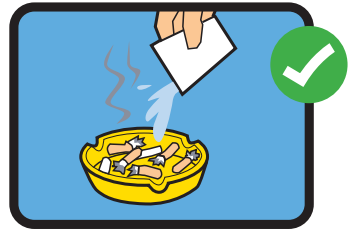
**Every three days someone dies from a fire caused by a cigarette.**

- 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.

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



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



# CANDLES

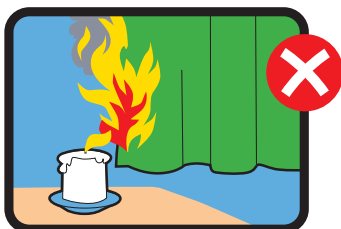
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**Treat lighted candles as you would any other flame.**

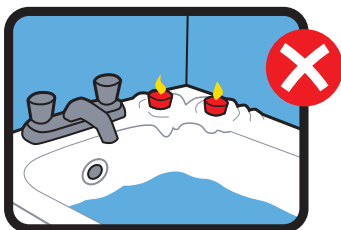
- Don't leave them unattended.
- Put them out completely at night.



- 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

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- 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.
- Close all doors. By shutting doors you can keep your route free from fire. This is particularly important in homes where you would not be able to escape from a window, for example if you live in a tall house (3 storeys and above) or a high-rise flat.

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## 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.



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## If your clothes catch fire...

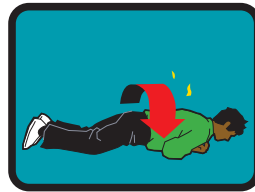
- Don't run around.
- Lie down and roll around.
- Smother the flames with a heavy material, like a coat, blanket or a fire blanket if there is one near.



**STOP!**



**DROP!**



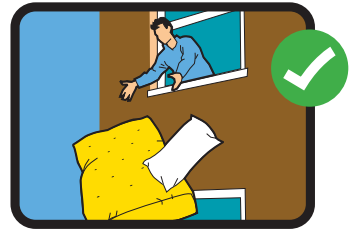
**ROLL!**

## 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 and Rescue Service

# 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.



***The basics – don't wait until later! If you do spot a problem, put it right now.***

## Smoke alarms

A smoke alarm has been fitted on every floor

Smoke alarm batteries have been tested in the last week

Smoke alarm batteries have been replaced in the last year

## Electrics

There is no more than one plug in each wall socket

If an adaptor is used, appliances running off it use no more than 13 amps in total

Fuses are the correct rating for each appliance

There are no loose or taped-up cables and leads

There are no plugs or sockets with scorch marks

## Kitchen essentials

The cooker, toaster and grill pans are clean

Electrical leads or flammable materials, such as tea towels or cloths, are away from the cooker and toaster



## General risks

Lights are not near curtains or other materials that can catch fire easily



Any matches or lighters are out of children's reach

All upholstered furniture in the property has a fire-resistant label



***You are far more likely to be killed or injured in a fire during the night – get used to checking your home is safe before you go to bed.***

## Last thing at night

- Switch off and unplug electrical appliances you are not using unless they are designed to remain on like the freezer or VCR for example.
- 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, this would slow the spread of a fire.

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## Regular checks and maintenance

**Every week:** - test your smoke alarm battery.

**Every year:** - change your smoke alarm battery (unless it is of the 10 year type);  
- 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 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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