



Keeping your family safe from fire

Advice for Parents and Carers

Fire safety starts at home

Most fires in the home can be prevented. Actions such as:



Testing smoke alarms every week, keeping them clean and well maintained

Storing and charging electrical items safely



Talking to children about fire risks can make a significant difference.

Fire safety is not about causing worry; it is about helping families feel prepared and confident about what to do if an emergency occurs. Working smoke alarms are one of the most effective ways to protect your household, and every family should be aware of their escape routes and what to do if an alarm sounds.

Safety actions to protect your home

Many household fires start through everyday activities.

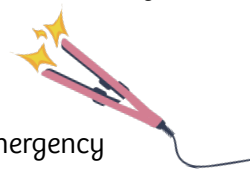
Cooking remains one of the most common causes of accidental fires, particularly when food is left unattended or when cookers and cooking surfaces are used for extra storage, as items left on or near hobs can accidentally catch fire.



Faulty electrical equipment, damaged charging cables and overloaded plug sockets can also present significant risks. Developing safe habits, such as switching appliances off when not in use, avoiding overloading extension leads and keeping flammable materials away from heat sources, can help reduce the likelihood of a fire starting in your home.

As children grow older, they often spend more time independently in their bedrooms and make greater use of technology. It is important for parents and carers to know where devices are being charged and to encourage safe charging habits.

Phones, tablets, laptops and gaming equipment should never be charged under pillows, on beds or beneath blankets where heat can build up. Hair straighteners should be fully switched off after use and allowed to cool safely. It is also worth having conversations about candles, incense burners and any other items that generate heat.



Children are naturally curious and may have questions about fire, fireworks or emergency services. Open and age-appropriate conversations can help them understand both the dangers and the importance of safe behaviour. Encourage children to

tell an adult if they find matches, lighters or damaged electrical items. Explain that smoke can be just as dangerous as flames and that hiding during a fire can make it more difficult for firefighters to help them. Reassure children that knowing what to do in an emergency helps to keep everyone safe.



Creating a family escape plan

Every family should have a simple escape plan. Take time to identify the quickest way out of each room and, where possible, a second route in case the first is blocked. Make sure everyone in the household knows these routes and understands what to do if they hear the smoke alarm. Keep exits clear so that everyone can leave quickly in an emergency and ensure keys are stored in a safe but accessible place.

All family members should know where they are kept. Choose a family meeting point outside the home as this helps ensure everyone can be accounted for safely and reduces the risk of anyone re-entering the building. If there is a fire, get out, stay out and call 999. Teach younger children never to hide during a fire and never to go back inside for toys, pets or belongings.



Your family escape plan should also cover what to do if you cannot leave the property safely. If your escape route is blocked, move to a room with a window if possible and close the door behind you. Use towels, bedding or clothing to block gaps around the door to help prevent smoke entering the room. Open the window, call for help and dial 999 if you can. If you are on an upper floor, do not jump from a window; stay where you are and wait for rescue. If you live in a flat, make sure everyone in the household is familiar with the building's fire safety arrangements, evacuation procedures and escape routes, including the importance of not using lifts during a fire.

Fireworks, Deliberate Fires and Hoax Calls

Some children might not fully understand the consequences of irresponsible behaviour involving fire. Deliberately setting fires, misusing fireworks or making hoax calls to emergency services can place lives at risk and divert valuable resources away from genuine emergencies. Parents and carers play an important role in helping young people understand how these actions can affect individuals, families and communities. Taking opportunities to discuss news stories, local incidents or community events can help reinforce these messages.



Knowing your rights and the support available

Local authorities, housing teams, Citizens Advice, community organisations and charities may be able to assist with a range of issues, including housing conditions, household safety and family wellbeing. Many local Fire and Rescue Services also offer free Home Fire Safety Checks, providing practical advice tailored to individual households and circumstances.

If you rent your home, your landlord has legal responsibilities to help keep you safe. In England, landlords must provide smoke alarms on every storey of a property, ensure gas appliances are checked annually where provided, maintain safe electrical installations and provide appropriate carbon monoxide alarms where required. They should also ensure that escape routes can be used safely at all times.

If you have concerns about fire safety, speak to your landlord or letting agent first. If problems are not resolved, your local council's housing team, Shelter or Citizens Advice may be able to offer support and guidance.

Useful Sources of Support

Further advice and support can be obtained from:

- Your Local Fire and Rescue Service
- Citizens Advice
- Shelter
- GOV.UK

These organisations provide information on home fire safety, housing rights, landlord responsibilities and support for families who may be experiencing difficulties.

Want to find out more?

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