



Fire safety

Fire and smoke can spread very quickly and both can kill.

It's important that everyone in your home knows how to prevent fires from starting, and what to do if one does break out.

Here you'll find all you need to know about:

- The risks of fire
- How we will help to keep your home and your community safe
- What you can do.

The risks

Very simple mistakes can cause fires, like overloading electrical sockets or not stubbing a cigarette out properly.

You're also more at risk if your smoke alarms in your home or in any communal area aren't working properly, because they may not alert you to a fire.

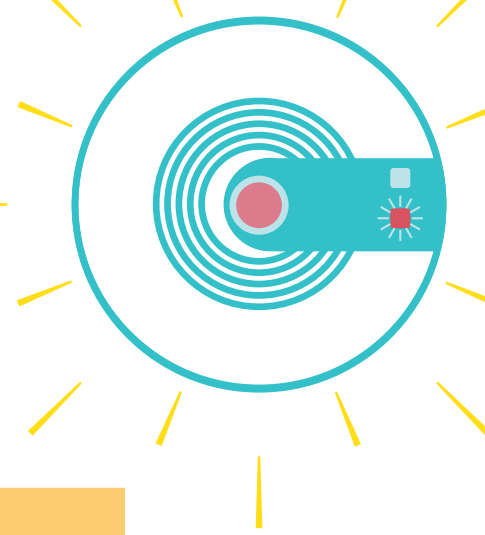
Please note:

Some communal areas in blocks of flats don't require smoke alarms because the flats are made of concrete compartments that will stop the fire and smoke from spreading. The weak point in a flat is the front door. All front doors in blocks of flats are fire doors and they must be kept closed to stop smoke and fire spreading.



What you can do

You, your family and visitors must take responsibility for preventing the outbreak of fire. By following a few simple steps and being aware, you can lower the chances of a fire in your home.



■ **Make sure you have a working smoke alarm at home**

Your smoke alarm should be fitted somewhere where you can hear it easily, such as a landing or hallway. Test your alarm regularly.

■ **Don't overload electrical sockets**

Keep to one plug per socket. Plugging in lots of electrical appliances into one socket can make it overheat and catch fire. Always switch off and unplug electrical items when they are not in use

■ **Use a qualified electrician**

Use a qualified electrician to repair all broken switches, sockets and light fittings, or any exposed wiring

■ **Know your fire escape plan**

Make sure everyone in your home knows what to do and how to get out if there is a fire. Get into the habit of closing doors at night, as this will help stop fires and smoke from spreading

■ **Put cigarettes out properly**

Never leave a cigarette unattended and never smoke in bed. Make sure cigarettes are stubbed out properly and are carefully thrown away. Keep matches and lighters where children cannot see or reach them

■ **Take care with candles**

Make sure candles are in secure holders on a surface that doesn't burn, and are away from anything that could burn. Always blow them out when you leave the room

■ **Take care when cooking**

Most house fires start in the kitchen. Be extra careful when using hot oil. Never leave children alone in the kitchen when the hob or oven is on, and don't leave anything on the hob unattended. Always clean grill pans after use as the residual fat is a common cause of kitchen fires

■ **Take care when drying clothes**

Don't dry or air clothes on or near heaters, cookers or open fires. Make sure open fires have fireguards.



Fire safety in communal areas and blocks of flats

What we will do to keep communal areas safe

- We frequently check fire alarms in communal areas that have them, and service each system four times a year
- We'll remove and immediately dispose of any items left in communal areas that are a hazard, a high fire risk or are obstructing fire escapes
- We'll also put a notice on all other items and write to residents living in the block telling them we will remove the items by a certain date. If no-one claims them, we'll either dispose of the items or, if they appear valuable, we'll store them and give the owners a chance to collect them. We may charge for storage, especially if an item is large or bulky. If no-one claims an item and we've stored it for a reasonable time, we'll dispose of it
- If you live in a block of flats, in one of our sheltered or supported schemes, or in a property with a communal area, we'll carry out regular fire risk assessments in the shared parts of the building. This will be every one, two or three years depending on the risk.



What you can do

As well as the tips above, there are a number of extra things you should do to keep communal areas safe from fires.

■ Keep fire doors shut

Keep fire doors closed at all times, as they help to slow down the spread of fire and will give you extra time to get out. Bin rooms and access doors to the building should also be kept secure to prevent any intruders starting deliberate fires. Don't wedge fire doors open. They're there for your protection, in the event of a fire

■ Make sure your escape route is clear

Make sure that your exits are clear from clutter, so you can get out if you need to. Please don't leave any rubbish, bikes or prams in communal hallways, stair ways, or drying rooms. Blocking exits can cause serious delays and trip hazards. If you see someone dumping rubbish of any kind in communal areas, please call us to report this. You don't have to give your name

■ Plan your escape route

This is mentioned above, but it's even more important if you live in a block of flats because the route may be unfamiliar, lengthy or complicated. It's worth practising your escape route a couple of times, just so you know where you're going and how long it'll take you

■ **Make your own arrangements to charge and store mobility scooters**

If you have a mobility scooter you need to make your own arrangements to store and charge it. Please don't store them in communal areas, including landings, lifts, foyers, stairwells and community rooms, or run extension leads into corridors to charge them

■ **Don't smoke in communal areas**

Don't smoke in communal areas, it's against the law. This includes landings, lifts, foyers, stairwells, walkways, community rooms and storage cage areas

■ **Don't store flammable goods**

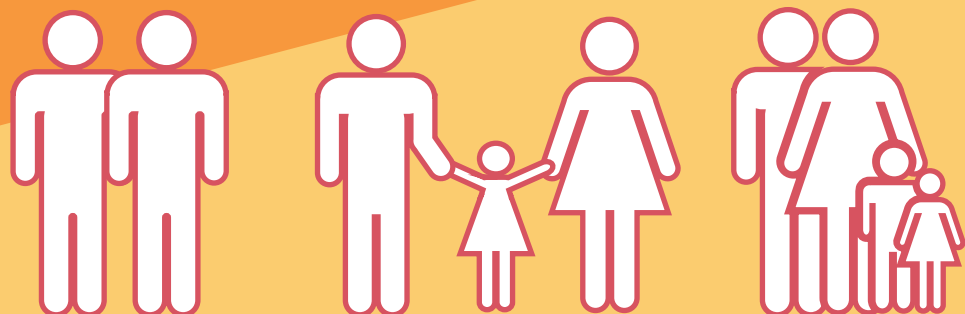
Don't use or store propane gas cylinders, paraffin or other flammable liquids (such as petrol) anywhere in your home or in any communal areas where you live.

What to do in an emergency

In the event of a fire in your home, your block, or in a communal area, try to remember these top tips:

- Try and **stay calm**
- Don't waste time looking for the fire or trying to tackle it. **Leave that to the Fire Brigade**
- **Alert everyone else** in your home or block to the fire and get out as quickly as possible (unless a "stay put" policy applies to you)
- **Don't stop** to collect any personal belongings
- **Close the doors** as you leave, especially the front door
- If there is one, **don't use the lift**. Always use the stairs
- **Call 999** as soon as you're clear of the building. You can call 999 on your mobile phone even if you have no credit
- **Don't go back into the building** until you've been told that it's safe to do so by the Fire Brigade.

“ **Call
999** ”



What to do if you become trapped by a fire in your home

If you become trapped in your home by a fire you should:

- **Call 999** if there's a phone in the room you're in. If not shout for help out of the window
- **Close the door** to the room you are in
- Try to **seal any gaps under the door** with clothes or towels to stop smoke getting in.



What to do if there's a fire in your block of flats

In some of our blocks of flats, we advise you to “**stay put**” in the event of a fire. This only applies to blocks that are made of concrete compartments that will stop fire and smoke from spreading. This advice is based on recommendations of the Fire Brigade, is seen as best practice and the safest option to take if there is a fire.

If you live in a “stay put” block, this will be clearly marked on the ‘Fire action notice’ in communal areas around your building.

If this policy applies to your block, you should do the following:

If a fire breaks out in your flat

- **Alert everyone** in your flat and make your way out of the building (closing the door)
- **Call 999**
- **Don't use a lift** to leave, always use the stairs
- **Don't re-enter the building** until you're told it's safe to do so by the Fire Brigade.

If a fire starts in a communal area close to you

- Make your **way out of the building immediately**
- **Call 999**
- **Don't use a lift** to leave, always use the stairs
- **Don't re-enter the building** until you're told it's safe to do so by the Fire Brigade.

If a fire breaks out in another part of the building and you're not directly affected

- You should stay in your flat until you are told it is safe to leave, however, if you feel unsafe, are concerned about staying put, or smoke is affecting your flat, make your way out of the building immediately – the judgement is yours.
- **Call 999**
- **Be ready to leave** if firefighters come to your door and tell you to evacuate the building.

“ Call
999 ”