



Fire safety



Large print format available

If someone in your household needs this information in large print or as an audio recording please contact our Customer Service Centre on **020 3535 3535**.

This leaflet explains how you can protect your home 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
- Every year 21 people die because the battery in their smoke alarm was flat or missing at the time of the fire
- Around half of fires in the home result from cooking accidents
- Three fires are started every day by candles
- Somebody dies every five days from a fire caused by a cigarette
- Faulty electrics (appliances, wiring or overloaded sockets) cause around 6,000 fires in the home across the country every year.

Remember!

Please make sure you allow us into your home so we can carry out obligatory checks on your gas supply and carry out any electrical maintenance

Smoke alarms

The easiest way to protect your home and family from fire is to make sure your smoke alarm works. How can you make sure it's working properly?

You just need to follow these tips:

- Test your smoke alarm every week
- Test it by pressing the button until the alarm sounds. If it doesn't sound, let us know by getting in touch on **020 3535 3535** or **contactus@metropolitan.org.uk**
- If your smoke alarm starts to beep on a regular basis, you need to change the battery. Check **www.metropolitan.org.uk/fix-it** to find out how

Top tip

Keep pan handles out of reach when cooking on the hob

How to prevent common fires in your home

In the kitchen

Half of accidental fires in the home start in the kitchen so follow these tips on cooking safely:

- Take care if you're wearing loose clothing as it can catch fire
- Avoid leaving children alone in the kitchen when cooking on the hob
- Keep matches and pan handles out of their reach to keep them safe
- If you need to leave the kitchen whilst cooking, turn the heat off or down
- Take particular care when cooking with hot oil as it can set alight easily
- If oil starts to smoke, it means it's too hot – turn off the heat and let it cool but do NOT throw water on it



- Remember that thermostat-controlled fat fryers can't overheat
- Keep tea towels and cloths away from any heat
- Make sure the cooker or hob are switched off when you finish cooking
- Spark ignition devices are better than matches or lighters to light gas cookers because they don't have a naked flame.

Top tip

If a fire starts in your home, get out, stay out and call 999

Take care with electrics – in the kitchen

- Keep electrics (leads and appliances) away from water
- Keep toasters clean and away from curtains or kitchen roll
- Keep the oven, hob and grill clean and in good working order. A build up of fat or grease can ignite a fire
- Never put anything metal in the microwave
- Try and keep to one plug per socket.

Take care with electrics – around the house

- Extension leads or adaptors have a limit to how many amps they can take – don't overload
- Certain appliances, such as washing machines, should have a single plug socket to themselves
- Make sure all electrical appliances have a British or European safety mark



- Always check you have the right fuse to prevent overheating
- Unplug appliances when you're not using them or when you go to bed as this helps reduce the risk of fire
- Keep electrical appliances clean and in good working order to prevent them triggering a fire
- Look out 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 reason, or flickering lights
- Check and replace any old cables or leads, especially if they're out of sight behind furniture or under carpets.

Furniture

- Always make sure your furniture has the fire-resistant label.



Electric blankets

- Store them flat, rolled up or loosely folded to prevent damaging the internal wiring
- Unplug the blanket 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.

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.

Cigarettes

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

- Never smoke in bed
- Use a proper ashtray – never a wastepaper basket
- Make sure your ashtray can't tip over and is made of a material that won't burn
- Never leave a lit cigarette, cigar or pipe lying around as they can easily fall over and start a fire
- Take extra care smoking when you're tired, taking prescription drugs or if you've been drinking as you might fall asleep and set your bed or sofa on fire
- Keep matches and lighters out of children's reach
- Consider buying child resistant lighters and match boxes
- Matchboxes now carry this warning label

Candles

- Make sure candles are secured in a proper holder and away from any material, such as curtains, that could catch fire
- Put candles out when you leave the room and make sure they're completely out at night

Top tip

Put cigarettes out, right out!

- Use a snuffer or spoon to put candles out as this is safer than blowing them out when sparks can fly
- Don't leave children alone with lit candles
- Keep pets away from lit candles.

Plan a safe escape

A working smoke alarm is the first crucial step to protecting yourself from fire. But what would you do if it went off? This section will help you make a plan so you're 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 all 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 any changes are made to the layout of your home

Keep door and window keys where everyone can find them.

Top tip

Plan an escape route



Top tip

Get out, stay out and call 999!

What to do if there is a fire

Don't tackle fires yourself – leave it to the professionals

- Keep calm and act quickly, making sure everyone gets 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



What to do if your escape is blocked

- If you can't get out, get everyone into one room, ideally one with a window and take your phone
- Put bedding or towels around the bottom of the door to block out the smoke, 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
- Use bedding to cushion your landing and lower yourself carefully – **don't jump**.

What to do if your clothes catch fire

- Don't run around, you'll make the flames worse
- Lie down and roll around – this makes it harder for the fire to spread
- Smother flames with heavy material, such as a coat or blanket
- **Remember: Stop, Drop, Roll!**

Top tip

If you can't open the window, break the glass in the bottom corner. Make any jagged edges safe with a towel or blanket.

How to escape from a tall building

- As with all buildings, you should plan and practise an escape route
- Avoid using lifts and balconies if there's a fire
- It's easy to get confused and disorientated in smoke so count how many doors you need to go through to reach the stairs
- Check there's nothing in corridors or stairways that could catch fire, such as boxes or rubbish

Top tip

Close inside doors at night



- Make sure doors to stairways aren't locked
- Make sure everyone knows where the fire alarms are
- Even if there is a warning system in the building, make sure your smoke alarm is in working order.

Make a bedtime check

You're more at risk from fire when you're asleep so it's a good idea to do a check before you go to bed.

Follow this handy check list:

- Close inside doors to stop a fire spreading
- Turn off and unplug electrical appliances (except those designed to be left on, such as your fridge or freezer)
- Make sure your cooker's switched off
- Don't leave your washing machine on
- Turn heaters off and put up fireguards
- Put candles and cigarettes out properly
- Make sure exits are clear
- Keep door and window keys where everyone can find them.

Metropolitan is a leading provider of integrated housing, care and support services.

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