NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

Fire Safety in the Home

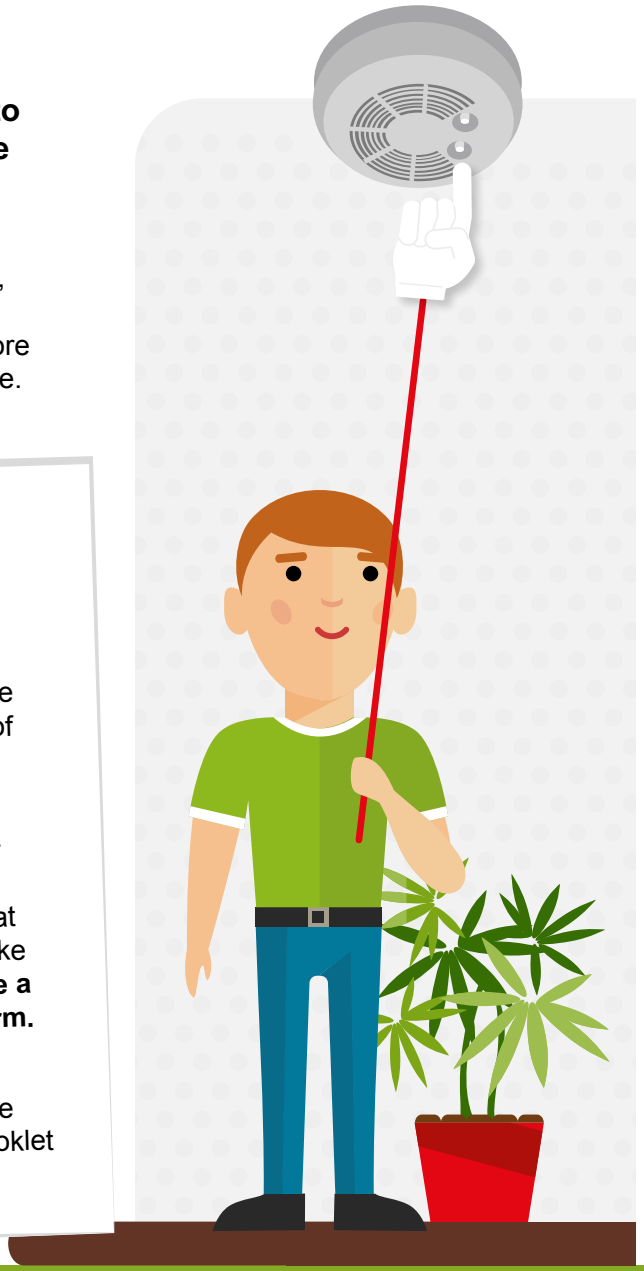


Providing exceptional fire and rescue services for all

Smoke alarms

Did you know...
that you are twice as likely to die in a fire if you don't have working smoke alarms?

Smoke alarms are there for the safety of you and your loved ones, and by having working smoke alarms, you are giving yourself more time to escape in the event of a fire.



Here is our smoke alarms checklist:

- Test smoke alarms monthly.
- Have a working smoke alarm on every level of your home.
- If your smoke alarm starts beeping, it may be that the batteries need changing, or that you need a new smoke alarm – **never ignore a beeping smoke alarm.**
- Do you have a fire escape plan? See the back page of this booklet and make yours.

Kitchen safety

Did you know...
that a build-up of crumbs, fat and grease on your kitchen appliances could easily catch fire?

This is why it is important to keep your kitchen appliances clean, including your toaster, hob and microwave.

Keep flammable items such as curtains and tea towels away from these appliances.



Other tips for kitchen safety include:

Don't get distracted when cooking, and stay in the kitchen.

Never fill a pan more than one third full of oil or fat.

Turn pot handles inwards so they can't be bumped and children can't grab them.

Never cook under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

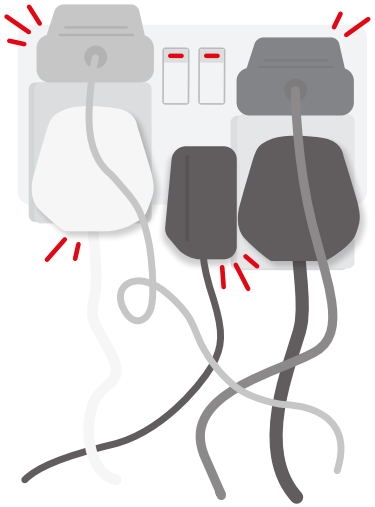
If a fire does occur in your property, get out, stay out and call 999.
In the event of your clothes catching fire, stop, drop and roll.

Electrical safety

When was the last time that you used your tumble dryer overnight?

Using tumble dryers while asleep or out of the house can be dangerous, as a build-up of fluff in the filter can cause fires. So we recommend that you clean your filters regularly, and only put washing machines, tumble dryers and dishwashers on when you are at home and awake.





Check out our electrical safety tips below for a safer home:

1. Stick to one plug per socket to avoid overloading sockets.
2. Don’t run cables under carpets or rugs. They will get hot.
3. While charging your mobile phone or tablet, keep it on a hard surface instead of under a pillow, on a bed or on a sofa which all absorb heat.
4. Check cables and plugs for wear and tear. Do not use any with exposed wires.

Keep up to date with recalls or faults with appliances by visiting **www.registermyappliance.org.uk**

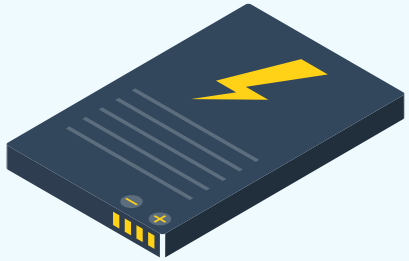
Lithium batteries

Did you know...

that lithium batteries are found in many household items: mobile phones, cameras, laptops and desktop computers as well as electronic cigarettes, scooters and bikes?

Although accidents are rare, those that do occur may be significant, resulting in a fire or even an explosion.

The risk of fire or explosion increases if the battery is exposed to hot conditions or the battery or internal component is damaged.



You can reduce the risk of an accident in several ways...

- ☑ Avoid storing them at high temperatures. Don’t keep batteries in hot vehicles, don’t allow a blanket to cover your laptop and don’t keep your mobile phone in a warm pocket.
- ☑ Keep the battery and device away from sun exposure and store in a cool place.
- ☑ Use the correct manufacturer’s charger.
- ☑ Do not place mobile phones or electronic cigarettes under pillows or blankets while charging.
- ☑ Never charge scooters or bikes in an escape route.
- ☑ If you have dropped or damaged your mobile phone, have it checked by a professional.
- ☑ Avoid overcharging your batteries.

Emollient products



Did you know...
that skin emollient products can be easily ignited with a naked flame or cigarette when in contact with clothing, bedding and dressings?

Emollient products, which include creams, ointments, sprays and body wash formulations, are used by millions of people every day to manage dry, itchy or scaly skin conditions such as eczema, psoriasis and ichthyosis. They may contain paraffin or other ingredients such as shea or cocoa butter, beeswax, lanolin, nut oil or mineral oils which can leave a flammable residue.



Make sure to tell your doctor, nurse or pharmacist if you smoke while using these products. They can significantly increase the flammability of fabrics when absorbed into materials such as clothing, bedding, or bandages.

To use these products safely, follow our tips:

- Never smoke or use naked flames, or be near to someone who is smoking whilst these products are in contact with clothing, bedding, dressings or bandages etc.
- Ensure that clothes and bedding are changed regularly when using these products, as the emollient product soaks into the fabrics, which can be a potential fire hazard. Wash at high temperatures to reduce the risk.



Candle safety

Did you know...
that you should always use candles, divas and tea lights in a proper secure holder?

This is because naked flames which are not in protective holders can set fire to other items easily.

- Never have a naked flame within the reach of children or pets.
- Keep the flame at a safe distance from curtains, furniture, long hair, and clothing.
- Always extinguish candles when going to bed or leaving the room.
- If you are using a diva to worship, only use as much oil or ghee as you need to last your prayers.



Smoking

Did you know...
it's easy to fall asleep with a cigarette burning and set furniture, clothes or bedding alight. Never smoke in bed.

Fires caused by smoking materials kill more people than any other type of fire. If you smoke, check out our smoking safety tips below:

- Put it out, right out. Stub your smoking materials out properly and dispose of them carefully.
- Make sure your ashtray won't tip over and is made of a material that won't burn.
- Ensure that contents of ashtrays are cold before they are emptied into a suitable bin outside the home. Putting water on ashes or butts is a good idea.
- Never smoke or let someone else do so in the same room as you if you use oxygen equipment or an airflow mattress.
- Don't smoke if you've taken medication, drugs or alcohol that make you tired or drowsy.
- Always keep matches and lighters away from children.



Smoking cessation

It's never too late to quit smoking, and health begins to improve when you stop.

1. The best way to prevent a smoking related fire in your home is to quit or to smoke outside.
2. There are services who can offer support to smokers who wish to quit and would like to try an e-cigarette. For help and advice to stop smoking, contact your GP or your local Stop Smoking Service.
3. If you use e-cigarettes, you should always use the correct charger and never leave the device on charge unattended.

Have you ever thought about quitting smoking?

Illicit tobacco

Did you know...
that illicit tobacco products are often more likely to cause a fire?

Illicit tobacco refers to a wide range of illegal tobacco products, including those that are smuggled, counterfeit and illicit (cheap) white cigarettes.

Some of the above may contain even more harmful 'substitute' substances. They may not be made with fire-safe paper, meaning they would be more likely to cause fires if left unattended or stubbed out.



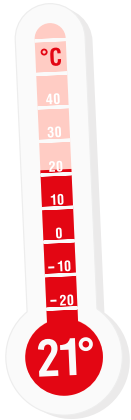
Keep warm but stay safe

Did you know...
that you should move furniture away from walls and radiators in your house?

This is so that warm air can circulate around the room, making sure you stay warmer in your home.

> **It is a good idea to sign up to the priority register with your energy supplier. You will be prioritised in the event of an unplanned power cut and get access to a range of free services, such as help with meter readings and getting your bills printed in large print or braille.**

Stay warm in cold spells with the following advice:



1. It is recommended that you keep your living room at a temperature of 21 degrees, and other rooms at 18 degrees.
2. Reduce your heating bill by using a timer to regulate your heating.
3. Close internal doors and draw your curtains at night to keep warm air in the room.
4. Make sure that you have plenty of hot food and drinks to keep you warm.
5. Have your boiler serviced every year to make sure that it's working properly.
6. If you have conditions such as respiratory, cardiovascular or mobility symptoms, you may be able to get assistance with keeping your home warm.
7. Reduce heat loss and problems with damp and mould by insulating your loft and walls. Install 300mm of insulation in the loft and insulate the walls and draughtproof floors, windows and doors.
8. Check your electric blanket is not damaged and follow the manufacturer instructions.
9. If you use your chimney, get it swept at least once a year and before the winter.

Portable heaters, log burners and open fires

Did you know that you should never hang clothes or other items on portable heaters to dry them?

While these heaters can be good for adding warmth to your home, clothes can catch fire easily.



If you have an open fire, log burner or use portable heaters, follow our guide on how to use them safely.

- ☑ Always use a fireguard with an open fire or log burner, especially if you have children or pets.
- ☑ Check that fires are out and that heaters are unplugged before you go to bed or leave the house.
- ☑ Choose a safe place to put your heater which is away from curtains and furniture.
- ☑ To dispose of hot ashes safely, let them cool completely away from anything flammable, before placing in general waste or using in the garden once fully cold.
- ☑ Store fuel such as logs, kindling and briquettes away from heat/ignition sources.
- ☑ **Make sure you have a carbon monoxide alarm.**

Stay safe - reduce your fire risk

Did you know...
that if you store large amounts of possessions in or around your home, you may be putting yourself at increased risk of fire?



Escape route

Make sure all doors are closed at night to stop the spread of fire. Make sure your escape route is clear of possessions and that you have a clear escape route in communal areas of flats.



Electrical

Avoid placing items on or close to heaters, lamps or other electrical equipment. Avoid overloading sockets.



Smoking

Use a proper ashtray on a flat, safe surface or try to smoke outside. Never smoke in bed or when you are sleepy.



Kitchen

Keep the cooking area clear as tea towels and cloths are flammable. Avoid using the oven, grill or hob for storage. Turn off all appliances when not in use.

Stairs

Keep stairs clear in order to reduce the risk of slips, trips and falls. Have an unobstructed means of escape to allow emergency services to rescue you if needed. Lots of possessions stored around your home can increase the fuel for a fire.



Alcohol

Did you know...
Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service attends a large number of alcohol-related fires every year, usually due to people drinking and then falling asleep whist cooking or smoking.

> **“Alcohol increases the risk of a fire starting and reduces your chances of escaping unharmed if a fire starts.”**



Alcohol or drug use may increase the likelihood of a fire, particularly from smoking, or other household activities, such as cooking because its effects inhibit the ability to make safe decisions. It also affects the ability to recognise and respond appropriately in case of a fire.

The best way to prevent an alcohol-related fire in the home is to drink sensibly and follow these fire safety tips:

- Don’t smoke if you’ve been drinking, especially if you feel tired or drunk. If you do smoke, it’s safer to smoke outdoors.
- Never smoke in bed, especially if you have been drinking – it’s too easy to fall asleep with a cigarette burning.
- Don’t cook if you’ve been drinking, especially if you feel tired or drunk and never leave your cooking unattended.
- Don’t burn candles if you’ve been drinking, especially if you feel tired or drunk. Always use a stable holder and never leave them unattended.
- Drinking less alcohol will reduce your risk of developing serious health issues such as cancer, liver or heart disease and could contribute to lowering your blood pressure.
- If you drink regularly you should consume no more than 14 units a week.



Mobility scooters

How to stay safe with your mobility scooter:

- Have your mobility scooter serviced regularly to make sure it is safe to use.
- Make sure your mobility scooter doesn't block yours or someone else's escape route.
- Make sure your charging area is safe and clear from clutter.
- If you live in a flat, check to see if there are designated areas to charge/keep your scooter.
- Avoid charging your scooter overnight.



Staying steady on your feet

Did you know...

if your health gets worse and you are less able to move around without help, your escape plan may need to change.

If you can move around by yourself, it is important to reduce the risk of slips, trips and falls so that you can stay healthy and escape easily in an emergency. As people get older the risk of falling does increase, staying active for as long as possible can help.



Follow our tips on avoiding falls below:

- Remove trip hazards from your home, including clutter, trailing wires and frayed carpets.
- Use non-slip mats and rugs or arrange for carpet grips to be fitted underneath.
- Make sure that you use a grip mat in the bath and shower, and arrange for grab rails to be fitted to assist you in getting in and out.
- Get help with tasks that you cannot do safely on your own.
- If you are getting dizzy or struggling with your balance, speak to your doctor.
- Check that your slippers and shoes fit properly on your feet, especially if they are old.

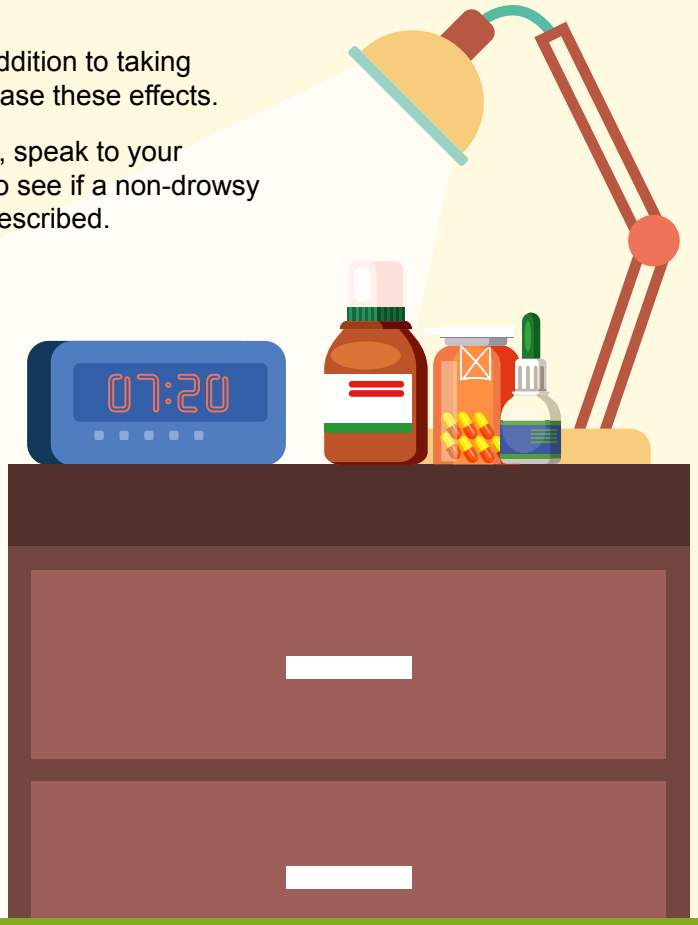
Medications

Some medications are designed to relax or induce calmness or sleep while others commonly cause drowsiness as a side effect.

Did you know...
that the effect of these medications can inhibit someone's ability to hear and respond to a smoke detector bleeping.

Drinking alcohol in addition to taking medication can increase these effects.

If you are concerned, speak to your health professional to see if a non-drowsy alternative can be prescribed.



Airflow mattresses

Dynamic airflow pressure-relieving mattresses and cushions are usually provided for the prevention and treatment of pressure sores and are used by people who have restricted mobility or are confined to bed.

Do not smoke or use naked flames on or near an airflow mattress.

Do not use or place any electrical items such as electric blankets, hairdryers, straighteners or curling tongs on or near the mattress.

Oxygen...

if you use home oxygen therapy (breathing in air that contains more oxygen than normal through a mask or tube connected to a device) you shouldn't smoke, cook or use open flames or static heat sources if oxygen is in use or has been in use within the previous 30 minutes.

Incontinence pads

Incontinence pads are often issued to people who are immobile or less mobile.

Did you know...
they are made of highly combustible material.

Please store them away from any heat or ignition sources and dispose of them carefully.

Bedtime checklist

- Close inside doors at night to stop a fire from spreading.
- Make sure that all electrical appliances are switched off and unplugged.
- Check your cooker is off.
- Avoid leaving your washing machine or tumble dryer on overnight.
- Make sure that all candles and cigarettes are put out properly.
- Make sure exits are clear at all times.
- Keep your door keys and window keys where everyone can find them.

Keep your phone handy when you go to bed, in case of an emergency



Fire escape plan

1. Draw up an escape plan so that everyone in the house knows what to do if the smoke alarm goes off during the night.

2. Establish your route out of the house.

3. Include alternative routes in case the way is blocked.

4. Make sure that everyone knows where to gather once they are out of the house.

If you are woken by your smoke alarm - stop, think, act!

Wake all the members of your family and make your way out together through the nearest exit

Get out, stay out and call 999!



Notes...

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

Our commitment to you

In this booklet, we have included information about fire safety and your health and wellbeing, which is part of our collaborative approach with our partner agencies in health, social care and local authorities.

Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) will keep your information as a record of our visit, and to help us evaluate our work. We would like to hear your feedback on the advice we have given and whether it has made a difference to you. To leave us feedback please visit our website or call us.

We will keep your details stored securely and will only share your information with other services if you agree, or if we have to, for example, to keep you safe from serious harm.

Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service
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