

# Home fire safety guide

## FIT SMOKE ALARMS AND TEST THEM REGULARLY



A fire can start anywhere in the home so early detection is vital. Fit smoke alarms in your lounge/living room, bedrooms, landings and hallways and fit a heat alarm in the kitchen.

### Examples of fire risk are rooms where:

- Electrical equipment is left switched on or on charge.
- People smoke.
- Candles, incense sticks, oil lamps or naked flames are used.
- Portable heaters are used.

It is important to ensure smoke alarms are fitted in the right place – don't fit a smoke alarm in the bathroom as steam can cause false alarms. Always follow the manufacturer's fitting instructions.

### Fit a heat alarm in your kitchen

Heat alarms detect the increase in temperature caused by a fire but will not be set off by cooking fumes.

## SMOKING



The best and safest option is not to smoke – it is harmful to your health and is the most common cause of fatal fires. For help or advice on quitting contact Smokefree National Helpline on: 0300 123 1044

If you are not ready to quit, take these simple precautions to prevent a fire:

- Smoke outside and always make sure cigarettes are put right out.
- Never smoke in bed or anywhere you could fall asleep.
- Do not leave any type of lit cigarette or pipe unattended.
- Use proper ashtrays and never throw hot ash into the bin.
- Keep matches and lighters well out of the reach of children.

If you have switched to vaping as an alternative, remember to follow the manufacturer's safety instructions. Always use the correct charger and never use an e-cigarette if it is damaged in any way.

## TAKE EXTRA CARE IN THE KITCHEN



- Never leave pans unattended when cooking.
- Don't cook if you are tired, have been drinking alcohol or taking medication that might make you drowsy.

### **If the pan does catch fire:**

- Don't tackle the fire yourself or try to move the pan.
- Never throw water onto it as this can create a fireball.
- If you can do so safely – turn off the heat.
- Leave the room and close the door. Shout to warn others to get out, stay out and call 999.

## ELECTRICS



- Never overload electrical sockets.
- If you have to use a fused in-line adaptor – know the limits.
- Don't leave items on continuous charge.
- Keep electrical appliances in good working order.
- Only leave essential appliances switched on such as the fridge or freezer. Turn all other electrical items off when they are not in use.

## ELECTRIC POWERED PERSONAL VEHICLES (EPPV's)



Never store or charge your EPPV or anything that uses lithium batteries on your escape routes including internal communal areas e.g. hallways and landings or on a balcony.

In the event of a fire it could block you or your neighbours escape routes and delay our fire fighters.

### **Remember!**

Converting pedal bikes into e-bikes using DIY kits bought online can be very dangerous and poses a higher risk of battery failure which could lead to a fire.

## LITHIUM BATTERIES



Lithium batteries are used to power thousands of products every day.

They are generally safe but can pose a fire risk when poorly maintained or used incorrectly.

### **Safety when charging**

- Follow the manufacturers' safety instructions and always use the charger that came with the device.
- Never leave a device charging overnight.
- Unplug your device when it's fully charged.

### **How to reduce the risk of overheating**

- Lithium batteries can get warm during their use. Allow them to cool down before attempting to re-charge.
- Don't cover the device when it is being charged – it could overheat.
- Don't expose to extreme of temperatures of heat or cold.
- Damaged batteries can pose a fire risk, take extra care not to knock when in use or while being carried.
- Never tamper with or try to or modify a battery pack.

## HEATING



- Sit at least one metre away from heaters.
- Keep heaters well away from anything that can catch alight and never use them to dry clothes.

## CANDLES



- Candles, tea lights, oil lamps and incense should only be placed in stable, heat resistant holders.
- Keep them away from materials that may catch fire such as curtains, furniture, papers and clothes.
- Flameless LED candles can be a safer alternative to tea lights.

## STAY SAFE WHEN YOU GO TO BED



- Close all doors as this helps to prevent fire and toxic smoke spreading.
- Switch off and unplug electrical items such as TVs.
- Avoid charging devices like mobile phones when you sleep.
- Make sure candles are out before you go to bed.
- Check your cooker and heaters are turned off.

## KNOW WHAT TO DO IN A FIRE



### Plan your escape

- Make an escape plan and practise it regularly to make sure everyone knows how to get out safely.
- The best route is the normal way in and out of your home.
- Plan a second route in case the first one is blocked.
- Never store anything in communal areas including balconies. Items can block your escape route and be a fire risk.
- Always keep door and window keys where everyone you live with can find them.

## ESCAPING FROM A HOME FIRE



- If any of your smoke alarms go off, follow your escape plan, get out and call 999.
- Shout 'FIRE' to warn others and don't stop to pick up valuables.
- Check closed doors with the back of your hand. Do not open the door if it feels warm – the fire may be on the other side.
- Smoke can kill, get down as low as possible where the air will be clearer.
- If your escape is blocked by fire it may be safer to stay put until the fire brigade arrives. Close the door and use soft materials to block any gaps to stop the smoke. If you have a phone, call 999, go to a window, shout "HELP, FIRE" and wait to be rescued.

## **FOLLOW THIS EXTRA ADVICE IF YOU LIVE IN A PURPOSE-BUILT MAISONETTE OR BLOCKS OF FLATS**



### **If your flat or maisonette is being affected by fire or smoke and your escape route is clear:**

- Get everyone out, close the door and walk calmly out of the building.
- Do not use the lift.
- Call 999, give your address, the number of your flat and state which floor the fire is on.

### **If there is a fire or smoke inside your flat or maisonette and your escape route is NOT clear:**

- It may be safer to stay in your flat or maisonette until the fire brigade arrives.
- Find a safe room, close the door and use soft materials to block any gaps to stop the smoke.

- Go to a window, shout "HELP, FIRE" and call 999.
- Be ready to describe where you are and the quickest way to reach you.

### **If there is a fire in another part of the building:**

- Purpose-built maisonettes or blocks of flats are built to give you some protection from fire. Walls, floors and doors can hold back flames and smoke for 30 to 60 minutes.
- You are usually safer staying put and calling 999. Tell the fire brigade where you are and the best way to reach you.
- If you are within the common parts of the building, leave and call 999.

## PRODUCT RECALLS AND WHITE GOODS SAFETY



On average one fire a day in London involves white goods such as washing machines, tumble dryers, fridges and freezers. Follow these tips to help you stay safe:

- Always register your white goods, new or old, to ensure that you are informed of any safety issues at: [registermyappliance.org.uk](http://registermyappliance.org.uk)
- If you smell burning or hear electrical 'sparking' noises, unplug the appliance and seek expert advice.
- Avoid keeping white goods, especially fridges or freezers on escape routes (eg hallways and landings).
- Information on product recalls can be found on the government's webpage at: [productrecall.campaign.gov.uk](http://productrecall.campaign.gov.uk)

## CARBON MONOXIDE

Carbon Monoxide (CO) is a poisonous gas that has no smell or taste and can kill quickly without warning. This can happen when gas appliances, heaters or solid fuel burners have been incorrectly fitted, poorly maintained or if flues or chimneys are blocked.

CO can kill quickly and without warning whether you are awake or sleeping. A slow build up of CO over a long period of time can also be deadly or lead to long-term health issues.

### What you can do:

- Fit CO alarms in all rooms where there is a solid fuel burning appliance eg gas cooker, fire or boiler, a solid fuel burner or open fire.
- Get all fuel burning appliances serviced regularly by a registered competent person.
- Most CO alarms are portable; take yours with you when going on holiday or visiting family and friends.



If symptoms only occur when you, your family, visitors or pets are at home and disappear or get better when you leave, it could be due to CO poisoning.

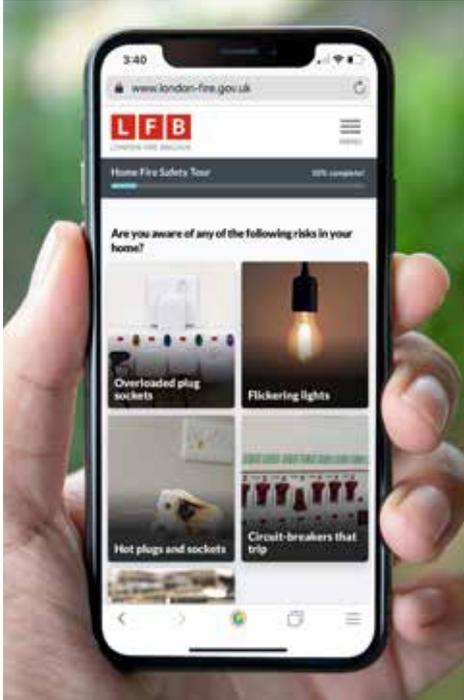
### What to do:

- Leave the property immediately.
- Seek medical attention as a priority, it's very important to say that you suspect CO poisoning and if possible explain why.
- Before returning to your home; call the Gas Emergency Number for safety advice (even if the suspected source is not a gas appliance/boiler): 0800 111 999.

## Symptoms



## HELP US HELP YOU



Fire safety is so important to keep your home and the people you love safe, but it can be hard to know what help you need.

That's where we can help – answer some questions using our online **Home Fire Safety Checker** and based on your level of risk, we will suggest fire safety actions that are right for you.

This could be booking a home visit from one of our crews or providing you with online advice that suits your needs.



Check your fire risk today – we'll get you the right help.

Scan this QR code:



or call us on **0800 028 4428**.



[london-fire.gov.uk](https://www.london-fire.gov.uk)