

STAY SAFE IN THE HOME



Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
De Cymru
South Wales
Fire and Rescue Service



Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
Fire and Rescue Service

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A SAFER WALES

PROTECT YOUR HOME WITH SMOKE ALARMS



Fire Safety in the Home

Did you know?

- You're more than twice as likely to die in a fire if you don't have a working smoke alarm.
- 18 people die each year because the battery in their smoke alarm is flat or missing.
- Over half of fires in the home are caused by cooking accidents.
- Three fires a day are started by candles.
- Every three days someone dies from a fire caused by a cigarette.
- Faulty electrics (appliances, wiring and overloaded sockets) cause many house fires across the country every year.

How to make sure your smoke alarm works

Test the batteries in your smoke alarm every week. Change them every year. Never remove them.

- Never disconnect or take the batteries out of your alarm if it goes off by mistake.
- Standard battery operated alarms are the cheapest option, but the batteries need to be replaced every year.
- Many people forget to test the batteries, so longer life batteries are better.
- An alarm with ten-year batteries is the best option.
- Mains-powered alarms are powered by your home power supply. Generally they don't need replacement batteries, but need to be installed by a qualified electrician.
- Alarms that plug into a light socket use a rechargeable battery, which is charged when the room's light is on.
- You can even have linked alarms installed, so that when one alarm detects a fire they all go off together. This is useful if you live in a large house or over several levels.

Strobe light and vibrating-pad alarms are available for those who are deaf or hard of hearing. Contact the Royal National Institute for Deaf People Information Line on **0808 808 0123**

Top tip



Test it



Looking after your smoke alarm

- Make testing your smoke alarm part of your regular household routine.
- Test it by pressing the button until the alarm sounds. If it doesn't sound, you need to replace the battery.
- If your smoke alarm starts to beep on a regular basis, you need to replace the battery immediately.
- If it is a ten year alarm, you will need to replace the whole alarm every ten years.

Other equipment you could consider:

- Fire blankets are used to put out a fire or wrap a person whose clothes are on fire. They are best kept in the kitchen.
- Fire extinguishers shoot out a jet to help control a fire. They are quick and simple to use, but always read the instructions first.



Test it



Change it



Replace it

In the kitchen

How to cook safely

Avoid leaving children in the kitchen alone when cooking on the hob. Keep matches and saucepan handles out of their reach to keep them safe.

- Take extra care if you need to leave the kitchen whilst cooking, take pans off the heat or turn them down to avoid risk.
- Make sure saucepan handles don't stick out – so they don't get knocked off the stove.
- Take care if you're wearing loose clothing, which can easily catch fire if caught on something hot.
- Keep tea towels and cloths away from the cooker and hob.
- Where possible, use spark devices instead of matches or lighters to light gas cookers, to avoid the naked flame.
- Double check the cooker is off when you've finished cooking. Take care with electrics.
- Keep electrics (leads and appliances) away from water.
- Check toasters are clean and placed away from curtains and kitchen rolls.
- Keep the oven, hob and grill clean and in good working order. A build up of fat and grease can ignite a fire.

Don't put anything metal in the microwave

Top tip



Keep out of reach

In the kitchen

Deep fat frying

- Take care when cooking with hot oil – it can catch fire easily.
- Make sure food is dry before putting it in hot oil to avoid splashing.
- If the oil starts to smoke – it's too hot. Turn off the heat and leave it to cool.
- Use a thermostat controlled electric deep fat fryer. They can't overheat.

What to do if a pan catches fire

- Don't take any risks. Turn off the heat if it's safe to do so. Never throw water over it.
- Don't tackle the fire yourself.

**GET OUT
STAY OUT
AND CALL
999**



Top tip



**Take care with
hot oil**

Electrics

How to avoid electrical fires

- Always check that you use the right fuse to prevent overheating.
- Make sure an electrical appliance has a British or European safety mark when you buy it.
- Certain appliances, such as washing machines, should have a single plug to themselves, as they are high powered.
- Try and keep to one plug per socket.



An extension lead or adaptor will have a limit to how many amps it can take, so be careful not to overload them to reduce the risk of a fire.

Appliances use different amounts of power - a television may use a 3amp plug and a vacuum cleaner a 5amp plug for example.

Know the limit!

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Keep electrical appliances clean and in good working order to prevent them triggering a fire.

- Keep your eyes peeled for signs of dangerous or loose wiring such as:
 - scorch marks
 - hot plugs and sockets
 - blown fuses
 - tripped circuit-breakers
 - flickering lights
- Check and replace any old cables or leads, especially if they are hidden from view – look behind furniture or under carpets and mats.
- Unplugging appliances helps reduce the risk of fire.
- Unplug appliances when you're not using them or when you go to bed.



Furniture

- Always ensure that your furniture has the fire-resistant permanent label.

Using an electric blanket

- Store electric blankets flat, rolled up to prevent damaging the internal wiring.
- Unplug blankets before you get into bed, unless they have 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 cigarettes 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.
- Don't leave a lit cigarette, cigar or pipe lying around. They can easily fall over and start a fire.

- Take extra care if you smoke when you're tired, taking prescription drugs, or if you've been drinking. 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 matchboxes.

Matchboxes now carry this warning label.



Top tip



**Put them out.
Right out!**



Candles

Make sure candles are secured in a proper holder and away from materials that may catch fire – like curtains.

- Put candles out when you leave the room, and make sure they're put out completely at night.
- Use a snuffer or a spoon to put out candles. It's safer than blowing them out as sparks can fly.
- Children shouldn't be left alone with lit candles.



**Be careful
with candles**



PLAN A SAFE ESCAPE

Fitting a smoke alarm is the first crucial step to protecting yourself from fire. But what would you do if it went off during the night?

This section will help you make a plan 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 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 practice your escape plan.
- Review your plan if the layout of your home changes.

Keep door and window keys where everyone can find them



Top tip



Plan an escape route



What to do if there is a fire

**Don't tackle fires yourself.
Leave it to the professionals.**

- Keep calm and act quickly, get everyone 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. 999 calls are free.



**Get out, stay out
and call 999**

What to do if your clothes catch fire

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



STOP!



DROP!



ROLL!

What to do if your escape is blocked

- If you can't get out, get everyone into one room, ideally with a window and a phone.
- Put bedding around the bottom of the door to block out the smoke, then open the window and call "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 fall and lower yourself down carefully. Don't jump.

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



How to escape from a high level building

- Avoid using lifts and balconies if there is a fire.
- It is easy to get confused in smoke, so count how many doors you need to go through to reach the stairs.
- Check there is nothing in the corridors or stairways that could catch fire – like boxes or rubbish.
- Make sure doors to stairways are not locked.
- Make sure everyone in the building knows where the fire alarms are.
- You should still get a smoke alarm for your own home, even if there is a warning system in the block.



MAKE A BEDTIME CHECK



You are more at risk
from a fire when asleep.
So it's a good idea to
check your home before
you go to bed.



Check list

- ☒ Close internal doors at night to stop a fire from spreading.
- ☒ Turn off and unplug electrical appliances unless they are designed to be left on – like your freezer. Check your cooker is turned off.
- ☒ Don't leave the washing machine on.
- ☒ Turn heaters off and put up fire guards.
- ☒ Put candles and cigarettes out properly.
- ☒ Make sure exits are kept clear.
- ☒ Keep door and window keys where everyone can find them.



**Close internal
doors at night**



SMOKE ALARMS

**SAVE
LIVES**

For a free Safe and Well visit call:

0800 169 1234 or text **07756 847123**

or visit:

www.southwales-fire.gov.uk

www.mawwfire.gov.uk

www.nwales-fireservice.org.uk