



Paragon Asra

**PA** Housing



# Fire Safety

# Fire Safety

**This leaflet sets out important information on fire safety based on Fire Service advice.**

## Smoke alarms

Having a fitted smoke alarm can mean the difference between life or death. If you don't have smoke alarms fitted in your trust property, please contact us immediately on 0300 123 2221. We can book an appointment to supply and install smoke alarms in your home completely FREE of charge.

## Stay safe when you're sleeping

Before going to bed always:

- Close all doors as this helps to prevent fire spreading;
- Switch off and unplug all electrical appliances except those that are meant to stay on, like the fridge;
- Make sure the cooker and heaters are turned off;
- Keep door and window keys where everyone can find them.

## Communal areas

By Law, PA Housing has a responsibility to maintain fire prevention systems. If you live in a building with communal areas please let us know if items are being stored in the common parts that could cause a fire or hinder peoples escape.

We also need to know if fire doors are being propped open or if anything provided for fire safety is not working properly or damaged. For example, fire doors that will not shut properly.

## Smoking

40% of deaths caused by fires in the home are caused by cigarettes, cigars or tobacco. Households with a smoker are almost 1 1/2 times more likely to suffer a fire than non-smoking households.

### Safety Tips

- Make sure your cigarette, cigar or pipe is out when you've finished smoking it;
- Never leave lit cigarettes, cigars or pipes unattended;
- Take extra care when you're tired, have consumed alcohol or taking medication that can make you drowsy. It's easy to fall asleep without realising that your cigarette is still burning;
- Never smoke in bed – You could doze off and set your bed on fire;
- Always use a proper, heavy ashtray that won't tip over easily and is made of a material that won't burn;
- Never tip ash into a waste basket;
- Empty ashtrays frequently – wet the contents before emptying them into a metal bin outside the home;
- Keep all matches and lighters out of the reach of children. Use only one lighter/box of matches at a time so you will notice if it goes missing. Where possible buy child resistant lighters and matchboxes.

## Kitchen

Around 60% of accidental fires in the home start in the kitchen.

### Safety Tips

- Keep electrical leads, tea towels, cloths, loose clothing and anything else that may catch fire away from the oven and hob;

- Keep the oven, hob and grill clean – a build-up of fat and grease can easily catch fire;
- Keep your toaster clean and away from curtains, kitchen rolls and anything else that could catch fire;
- Never put anything metallic inside your microwave;
- Never attempt to sterilise dish cloths or sponges by heating them in the microwave;
- Use one plug in each socket. Use a fused adapter and keep the total output to no more than 13 amps (a kettle alone uses 13 amps). High-rated appliances always need their own;
- Check plugs have the correct fuse for the appliance being used. If in doubt, refer to the manufacturer's instructions or ask for advice;
- Turn off electrical appliances when not being used and have them serviced regularly;
- Keep electrical leads and appliances away from water;
- Use a spark device to light gas cookers as this is safer than using matches or lighters;
- Keep matches, lighters and pan handles where children can't reach them. Fit a child safety catch to the oven door;
- Take pans off the heat and turn off the hob and/or grill if you have to leave the kitchen while cooking, and make sure the oven, hob and grill is turned off when you have finished cooking.

## Chip pans/hot fat frying

- Never fill a pan more than a  $\frac{1}{3}$  full with fat or oil;
- Dry chips/food before putting them in the pan;
- If the oil has started smoking turn off the heat and leave the oil to cool down, otherwise it may catch fire;
- Turn off the hob if you have to leave the kitchen whilst cooking.

### If your pan catches fire

- Don't panic, don't take risks and don't move the pan;
- Never throw water or use a fire extinguisher on a hot fat fire;
- If it's safe to do so - turn off the heat, but never lean over the pan to reach the controls;
- Leave the kitchen, close the door behind you, tell everyone else in the home to get out and don't go back inside for any reason, call 999.

## Candles

- Always place your candles/tea lights in a suitable fire resistant candle holder;
- Make sure the candle holder holds the candle or tea light firmly and is on a flat, heat resistant surface, (tea lights can melt plastic surfaces such as the top of a television or the side of a bath);
- Always leave at least 10cm between burning candles/tea lights and never place them under shelves or other enclosed spaces. Keep out of the reach of children and pets;

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- Keep candles/tea lights away from curtains, furniture and anything else that can catch fire. Keep loose clothing and hair away from candles/tea lights when they are lit;
- Always put candles/tea lights out and leave to cool down before you try to move them. Always put candles/tea lights out when you are out of the room and when you go to sleep.

## Heaters

### Portable Heating Appliances

- Never sit too close to the heater as you could set light to your clothes or chair, especially if you fall asleep;
- Heaters should stand where they can't be knocked over, away from beds, furniture and fabrics;
- Do not put anything on the heater or use it to dry clothes;
- Make sure all heaters are guarded, particularly if you have children;
- Never try to move any portable heater while it is alight/switched on – always turn it off and allow it to cool first.

### Portable Gas Heaters

Portable gas heaters should not be used in flats and maisonettes, consider replacing any red-element heaters with an oil filled radiator.

## Electrical Equipment

### Wiring

- If you notice any of the warning signs below, inform your housing officer immediately;
- Hot plugs and sockets;

- Fuses that blow for no obvious reason;
- Lights that flicker;
- Brown scorch marks on sockets, plugs and fuse boxes;
- Frayed or pinched cables.

### Electrical Appliances

- Turn off and unplug all electrical appliances when you are not using them except those that are meant to be permanently switched on;
- If you have to use an adapter, use a fused 'in line' type;
- Don't run leads or cables under carpets or rugs – you won't be able to see if they become damaged;
- Check for signs of loose wiring and faulty plugs or sockets (such as scorch marks or flickering lights) and report them to the repairs and maintenance team;
- Replace worn, damaged or taped up leads and cables;
- Always use a proper ironing board and turn off the iron after use. Make sure the iron is left to cool on a heat resistant surface away from curtains, carpets and anything else that may catch fire;
- Always switch off hair straighteners/ curling tongs after use and leave to cool on a heat resistant surface away from curtains, carpets and anything else that can catch fire.

### Electric Blankets

- If your blanket has fraying fabric, scorch marks, exposed elements, creasing/ folding, soiling, loose connections or any other type of damage, have it replaced;

- Electric blankets should carry the British Standard Kite mark (BSK) and the British Electrotechnical Approvals Board (BEAB) symbol on them. All electric blankets should be replaced within 10 years;
- Don't fold electric blankets. Protect the wiring inside them by storing them flat or rolled up;
- Don't leave an electric blanket switched on all night, unless it has controls for safe all night use;
- Check whether it is an under or over blanket and use it only for that purpose;
- Use the ties on an under-blanket to secure it to the mattress. This prevents slipping and creasing which could damage the elements;
- Have your electric blanket tested every three years – many councils run free testing days each year, usually at the end of summer.

## Children

- Don't leave children on their own in a room where there is a fire risk;
- Never let them play near the oven
- Keep matches, lighters, candles and tea lights out of reach of children or in a locked cupboard;
- Put a childproof fire guard in front of heaters and don't let children play or leave toys near heaters;
- Keep portable heaters in a safe place where they can't be knocked over when they are being used or stored;
- Place plug guards into sockets so children can't stick anything into the holes;
- Keep your escape route clear of toys and other obstructions.

## Safety Tips

What to tell your children:

- If you see smoke or fire, raise the alarm and tell a grown up immediately;
- Get out of the building as soon as possible. Go to the house next door if you can and ask them to call 999;
- If there is smoke in the room, crawl low along the floor;
- Never hide in a cupboard or under the bed. Do all you can to raise the alarm and get out;
- If the way out is blocked, go into a room with a window. Put blankets or towels at the bottom of the door to stop smoke getting in. If there is a phone in the room, dial 999. If there isn't a phone, open the window and shout – help!
- Don't go back into the building, not even for pets.

## Starting Fires

If you think your child, or a child you know, is displaying fire setting tendencies or behaviour, you can contact the Juvenile Firesetters Intervention Scheme (JFIS). JFIS has been set up to address these issues, and trained advisers are available to meet with the child or young person and their parents.

## Fire safety for people with disabilities

If you have difficulty hearing, seeing or moving about you need to take extra care when dealing with fire risks. If you are concerned, contact your Housing or Tenancy Services Officer for advice.

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## Advice for older people

Many older people live alone and have reduced mobility, which makes it harder to escape from a fire.

Make an escape plan; think about how you can get out of your home and make sure the way out isn't blocked. If you live in sheltered accommodation or a residential home, ask your scheme manager to explain the safety plans for the premises and make sure you know your nearest route to safety.

## Escaping from a fire

Make sure you and those you live with know how to escape in the event of a fire.

## Calling 999

If you need the Fire Brigade, the Police or an Ambulance you should call 999. All 999 calls are free. You can make them from any phone, including mobile phones. Don't call 999 if it is not an emergency. All 999 calls are recorded and you are breaking the law if you make a hoax emergency call.

When you get through, the operator will ask you which emergency service you require - fire brigade, police or ambulance service. Please listen carefully and be patient.

You will then be put through to an emergency control room operator for the service you want. They will ask you a number of questions. Answer the questions clearly, and don't put the telephone down until you are told to.

## Your fire escape plan

- Preparing and practising a plan of action will help you to act quickly if there is a fire. Everyone who lives in your home should know this plan.

- If a fire starts the priority is to get everyone out and call 999. Don't try to fight a fire yourself;
- Put a reminder of what to do on the fridge door or notice board;
- Make sure everyone knows where the keys to doors and windows are kept;
- Choose an escape route. The best route is usually the normal way in and out of your home. Think of any difficulties you or the other people in your household may have;
- Choose a safe room. If you can't escape you will need to find a room where you can wait for the Fire Brigade. A safe room should have a window and a telephone.

## In the event of a fire

- If the smoke alarm goes off in your home or you discover a fire, shout to wake everyone up/alert them and get everyone together. Follow your escape plan and get out of the building;
- Walls, floors and doors will hold back flames and smoke for a time. If there is a fire elsewhere in the building you are usually safer staying in your flat unless heat or smoke is affecting you;
- Make your way out by the quickest route usually the front door. If you live in a flat close the door to your flat behind you;
- If you live in a building with a lift, do not use it if there is a fire, go down the stairs instead;
- Stay calm, do not stop to investigate the fire or to collect valuables or pets;
- Do not open any doors other than ones which you need to escape through;

- Close any doors which are open, and only open the doors you need to go through. This will help to stop the fire spreading so rapidly;
- Check doors with the back of your hand; if they are warm it means the fire is on the other side, so do not open them;
- If there is smoke, crawl along with your nose near to the floor where the air will be cleaner;
- Once everyone is out of the house call 999 from a call box, neighbour's house or mobile phone. Give the operator your name and address including the number of your house or flat, and tell them which floor the fire is on. Do not go back in until the Fire Service tells you it is safe to do so;
- If there is still someone inside, tell fire fighters when they arrive – they will be able to find the person quicker and more safely than you;
- Find somewhere safe to wait for the Fire Service. When they arrive, try to give them as much information as possible about the fire and building.

### **If you can't escape**

- Get everyone into one room, preferably one with a window that opens and that has a phone in it. Close the door and wait to be rescued;
- Put bedding or towels along the bottom of the door to seal the gap, to prevent smoke and fumes from getting into the room;
- Open the window and stay near it for fresh air, and to alert fire fighters when they arrive;

- If you have a phone, call the fire brigade. If you don't have a phone, shout for help so that someone else can phone for you.

### **If your clothes catch fire**

- Don't run around – you'll fan the flames and make them burn faster;
- Lie down and roll around to smother the flames;
- Smother the flames with heavy material like a coat, blanket or fire blanket.





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# PA Housing



## PA Housing

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## Your Needs

If you would like to receive this information in large print, or translated over the telephone, please call us.

Date of publication: June 2017

