

To book a **free Home Fire Safety Visit**  
call **0800 0731 999**  
or visit **[www.firescotland.gov.uk](http://www.firescotland.gov.uk)**



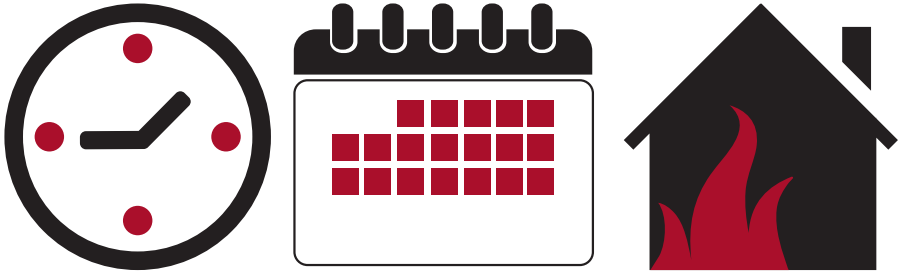
## Fact.

It's **important to know** how to **reduce the chances of fire** happening in your **home** and, if it does, how to **protect yourself**.



**SCOTTISH**  
**FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

Working together for a safer Scotland



# Every hour of every day there's a house fire in Scotland

**Everybody's home is at risk of fire. It's important to know how to reduce the chances of fire happening in your home and, if it does, how to protect yourself.**

Cooking accidents, overloaded sockets, faulty appliances, smoking and drinking are just some of the reasons why there are so many house fires in Scotland.

One lapse, such as leaving a pan unattended or failing to put out a cigarette properly, could **change your life** forever.



**The majority of fire deaths occur where there was either no smoke alarm or an alarm that didn't work.**

**DID YOU KNOW?**

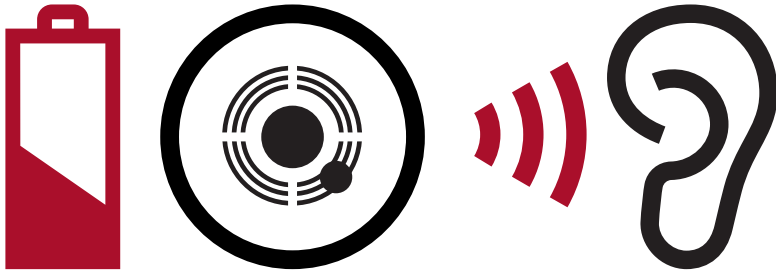
## **Imagine if this happened to **your home****

Most house fires start in the living room and kitchen. With lots of flammable materials around (e.g. curtains, cushions) extra care is needed. Gas or electric fires and electrical equipment are all potential fire hazards. Kitchens are full of ignition sources and electrical appliances that generate lots of heat. Electric blankets, portable heaters and smoking in bed all increase the risk of fire in the bedroom.

## **Is your **home safe?****

Taking simple steps like testing your smoke/heat alarms weekly, closing your doors at night and making an emergency escape plan could save your life if there is a fire. Remember, none of the people hurt last year thought it would happen to them.

A few simple questions can help you to spot risks in your home and to think about how to deal with them.



# Protecting yourself and your home

## Do you have smoke and heat alarms?

Smoke and heat alarms could help save your home, and your life.

- Test them **WEEKLY** and never remove the batteries.
  - If an alarm doesn't sound, fit a new battery.
  - If it still doesn't sound, buy a new alarm .
- Every year:**
- Replace the battery (unless you have a special 'long-life' alarm with a built in battery or your alarms are hard-wired to the electrical system). Choose a date you'll remember, like a birthday or anniversary.
  - Gently vacuum the inside and outside casing. If you're decorating or creating a lot of dust, use an elastic band to secure a plastic bag over the smoke alarm casing – don't forget to take it off when you're done.

If your home is on one level – a flat or bungalow – you need to fit at least one smoke alarm in the hallway. You may also consider a heat alarm in the kitchen and additional smoke alarms in each living room. You may also wish to consider fitting additional smoke alarms in bedrooms. This can be particularly important when there are extra fire risks such as televisions, computers or other electrical appliances, or in the bedrooms of persons who are bedridden or otherwise vulnerable from fire due to ill health or disability.

If your home has more than one level, you'll need at least one smoke alarm on each floor. If you have more than one alarm, they should preferably be linked up to each other, however stand-alone detectors are sufficient.

You can request a **free Home Fire Safety Visit** where firefighters come to your house and fit alarms for **free**, if you need them. They have a long life battery too, so you don't have to spend any money.

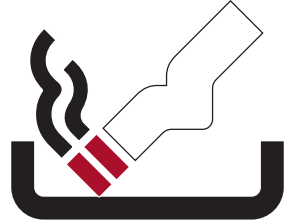
## **Have you made an emergency escape plan?**

Think about how you would get out of the house if you were to have a fire. The first choice is always through the main door, closing it once everyone's out. But if it's not safe to leave by the main door, how else could you escape?

- Is there another door you could use or a fire escape?
- Could you climb out of a first floor window onto a garage roof or extension and get down safely?
- Could you climb out of a ground floor window?

It doesn't take long to plan and it could save lives. Practicing helps everyone stay calm if there is a fire. It also helps you get to safety quicker.

**REMEMBER: GET OUT ,STAY OUT & DIAL 999**



## Reducing your **risk**

### **Does anyone smoke in your home?**

Smokers should always take care, especially if they're tired or have been drinking alcohol. Make sure cigarettes are properly stubbed out in an ashtray. Always empty the ashtray, pour water over the cigarette ends and put them in the bin outside.

### **Do you ever light candles or tealights?**

Make sure lit candles are kept in candle holders and can't be knocked over. Keep them well away from anything that could catch fire, like curtains, cards, cushions, TVs or even shelves. Never leave a lit candle alone – even for a few seconds – and if you're going out, or going to sleep, make sure candles are properly put out first.

### **Do you have gas heating or gas appliances?**

Gas boilers and appliances should be serviced once a year by a Gas Safe registered engineer. Visit [www.GasSafeRegister.co.uk](http://www.GasSafeRegister.co.uk) or call 0800 408 5500. You should also fit a Carbon Monoxide detector in your home.

## Do you check the fuses on your electrical appliances?

The fuse in a plug is a safety device that will 'blow' if there's a fault. This cuts off the electricity, stopping the appliance from overheating and causing a fire. Always make sure all your appliances are fitted with the right fuse\*.

### 3 AMP FUSE

lamps/bed lights  
televisions/radios  
electric blankets  
hi-fi/dvd players  
docking stations  
clocks/computers  
games consoles

### 13 AMP FUSE

refrigerators  
heaters  
kettles/toasters  
washing machines/dryers  
irons  
hair straighteners

\* These are guidelines only. Always check the manufacturer's instructions.

## Do you unplug and switch off appliances when you're not using them?

It's important to switch off and unplug appliances such as TVs, washing machines, dishwashers, computers and chargers when you're not using them because any electrical appliance that's left plugged into the mains could cause a fire. Take extra care to switch off before you go to sleep. Some household domestic appliances, like fridges and freezers are designed to be left on, but even these can cause fires if they're defective or not used properly. Always make sure proper ventilation is in place to help stop overheating.

## **Do you have any electrical cables running under carpets or rugs?**

If you're walking over cables they're at risk of damage, even if they're covered by carpet.

## **Do you use electrical adaptors or strip plugs?**

Adaptors let you plug more than one device into an electrical socket, but if they're overloaded they can cause a fire. Never use more than one adaptor in each socket, and never overload an adaptor, or join adaptors together. Choose a strip adaptor, rather than a block adaptor and take care that appliances you plug into it do not use more than 13 amps/3 kilowatts of electricity in total. Check appliance handbooks for details.



**Tip: Always make sure your adaptor is fitted with a fuse and has an Intertek BEAB kite mark and preferably choose one provided with electrical surge overload protection.**

## **Do you ever join and/or repair electrical cables with tape?**

Never repair or rejoin cables with insulating tape. Always replace the whole cable, or use an extension lead.

## **Do you have any lamps fitted with high powered light bulbs?**

All lamp shades advise the maximum wattage of light bulb that can be safely fitted. Always check this before fitting as higher watt bulbs can cause the shade to overheat and catch fire.

**Tip: Never cover lightbulbs or lampshades as they can quickly overheat and catch fire.**





# Your kitchen

## Do you cook with oil?

Cooking is a major cause of fire in our homes. **If you are tired avoid cooking. If you've been drinking alcohol or taking drugs, don't cook.**

Modern electric deep fat fryers are much safer than traditional chip pans as they have a safety switch that cuts them off, helping stop them overheating and catching fire. Try not to use a traditional chip pan if you can as there's always a high risk of fire. If you do choose to use one:

- Only ever fill one third full
- Turn the handle to the side – but not over any of the other cooker rings
- Fry in small amounts – overfilling could cause spills
- Make sure food going in it is dry, not dripping wet or covered in ice

Never:

- Fry food when you've been drinking alcohol or taking drugs or if you are feeling tired
- Leave the pan alone. It only takes a second for a fire to start

If your pan catches fire, and only if it's safe to do so, try to turn off the heat. Get out of the kitchen. Close the door. Phone the Fire and Rescue Service.

Never try to move the pan and never throw water on burning fat or oil.

## **Do you grill fatty foods?**

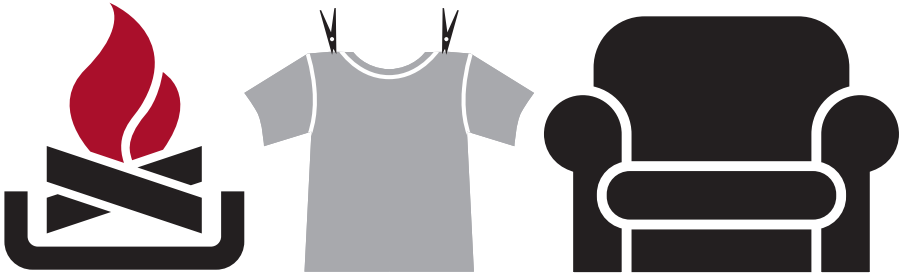
Remember to clean the grill pan every time you use it, as fat deposits build up and can easily catch fire.

## **Are there any electrical appliances or cables near your cooker?**

Heat from a cooker can easily damage electrical appliances or cables and cause a fire. Remember to keep appliances and cables a safe distance from your cooker.

## **Do you ever dry towels on or near your cooker?**

Never dry towels near or on top of the cooker as even damp towels can easily catch fire.



# Your Living Room

## **Do you have an open fire?**

Never leave a lit fire unattended without a fireguard. Never dry clothes in front of the fire or keep furniture closer than a metre (3 feet) from the fire.

**Tip: Always ensure your chimney is swept every year.**

## **Do you have a mirror over your fireplace?**

Mirrors above fireplaces encourage people to stand too close and risk setting clothes on fire.

## **Do you use a portable heater?**

Ensure that your heater is placed at least a metre (3 feet) away from anything that could catch fire, like a chair or clothing. Make sure you don't sit too close to the heater. If you fall asleep you could easily get burnt.



## Your Bedroom

### **Do you use an electric blanket?**

Electric blankets must be checked regularly and used with care. Check the blanket, plug and flex for damage and make sure it's either Intertek BEAB approved or marked BSEN60335-2-17:2002+A1,A2. If you're in any doubt, don't use the blanket. When in use, tie underblankets securely to the bed and when they're not in use, store safely – roll it, don't fold it.

**Tip: Blankets with an overheat protection safety system are best.**

### **Do you leave your electric blanket switched on when you're in bed?**

Always follow the manufacturer's instructions. Never leave an electric blanket switched on when you're in bed unless it's marked 'suitable for all night use'.

## Do you still have a guarantee for your blanket?

Blankets don't last forever. In fact, after the guarantee runs out (usually 3 years) it should be tested and serviced regularly by the manufacturer. Never use a damaged or defective electric blanket.

**Tip: It might just be cheaper and safer to buy a new one.**

## Do you smoke in bed?

Smoking in bed is definitely not recommended. But if you do, there should be a smoke alarm inside the bedroom. Remember to test all your smoke alarms every week.

## Helping keep your child safe

- Don't leave matches and candles where children can find them
- Use a child proof cigarette lighter with safety locks, which go out when you let go of them
- Make sure fires and heaters have fixed guards
- Don't place toys nearer than a metre (3 feet) to anything hot. Even if the toys don't catch fire, your child may be burned





# Fire Safety Checklists

## Your night-time routine

- 1.** Switch off and unplug all electrical appliances not designed to be left on overnight.
- 2.** Stub out all cigarettes and always empty ashtrays. Pour water over cigarette ends before putting them in the bin outside.
- 3.** Put fireguards around open fires. Don't build up the fire before you go to bed.
- 4.** Switch off portable heaters.
- 5.** Close all doors – it can keep your escape route free from smoke and may stop a fire spreading.
- 6.** Make sure the main door keys are to hand.
- 7.** If possible, make sure that you have access to a phone. A mobile phone on your bedside cabinet for example. (But don't charge the phone while you are sleeping.)

## Protecting yourself

**If there's a fire in your home, close the door where the fire is. This will help protect your escape route and stop the fire spreading so quickly.**

1. Think about how you would get out of the house if you were to have a fire, and practice so you're prepared.
2. Keep low. The air is cleaner and cooler near the floor.
3. Never open a door if it's warm to the touch.
4. Never use a lift. Always take the stairs.
5. If your clothing catches fire; stop, drop and roll. If it's someone else use a blanket, rug or thick coat.
6. Don't stop for valuables.
7. Shout 'Fire' to warn your family or passers by.
8. Never try to go back inside until a firefighter tells you it's safe.
9. Never jump out of a window from an upper floor. Stand by a window so firefighters can see you. But if you're on the first floor you may be able to lower yourself down on to cushions or pillows.

### **10. Remember: get out, stay out and dial 999.**

If you can't get out

- Try to get everyone into one room.
- Once everyone's together, pack clothes, cushions, pillows or towels around the door to keep smoke out.
- Open a window and shout 'Fire' until someone phones the Fire and Rescue Service.
- Keep leaning out of the open window for fresh air until the firefighters arrive.

# Useful contacts

## Silver Line Scotland

[wwwthesilverline.org.uk](http://wwwthesilverline.org.uk).

0800 4 70 80 90

A free, national helpline providing information, friendship and advice to older people, 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

## Scotland Crimestoppers

<https://crimestoppers-uk.org/>

0800 555 111

If you know anything about a crime, including fires that have been started deliberately in your area you can call Scotland Crimestoppers. All calls are completely anonymous.

## Citizens Advice Direct

[www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

0808 800 9060

Citizens Advice Direct is a provider of advice and information to the citizens of Scotland on a wide range of issues such as debt, employment, welfare and consumer advice.

## Shelter Scotland

[shelterscotland.org](http://shelterscotland.org)

0808 800 4444

Shelter Scotland helps over half a million people a year struggling with bad housing or homelessness – and campaigns to prevent it in the first place.

## Dumb Dumpers Stop Line

[www.dumbdumpers.org](http://www.dumbdumpers.org)

0845 2 30 40 90

Guidance and information on how you can help combat and report flytipping.

## NHS inform

[www.nhsinform.co.uk](http://www.nhsinform.co.uk)

0800 22 44 88

Provides a single source of quality assured health information for the public in Scotland.

## NHS 24

[www.nhs24.com](http://www.nhs24.com)

111

Call free on 111 if you are ill and it can't wait until your GP surgery reopens.

## Smokeline

[www.canstopsmoking.com](http://www.canstopsmoking.com)

0800 84 84 84

Scotland's national stop smoking helpline, open every day from 8am to 10pm.

## Scottish Domestic Abuse helpline

[www.sdah.info](http://www.sdah.info)

0800 027 1234

Dedicated to supporting all victims of domestic abuse by providing a compassionate, non judgemental 24 hour telephone service.

## Breathing Space:

[www.breathingspacescotland.co.uk](http://www.breathingspacescotland.co.uk)

0800 83 85 87

A free, confidential phone and web based service for people in Scotland experiencing low mood, depression or anxiety.

## Neighbourhood Watch Scotland

[www.neighbourhoodwatchscotland.co.uk](http://www.neighbourhoodwatchscotland.co.uk)

01786 476757

A community led initiative to bring local people together to address crime and other community safety issues

## Living It Up

[www.livingitup.org.uk](http://www.livingitup.org.uk)

A digital service for the over 50s designed to help you get more out of life and stay happier, healthier and safer.

## Living It Up

[www.livingitup.org.uk](http://www.livingitup.org.uk)

A digital self-management service for the over 50s designed to help you get more out of life and stay happier, healthier and safer.

## Smell Gas?

[www.sgn.co.uk/Safety/Smell-gas-0800-111-999](http://www.sgn.co.uk/Safety/Smell-gas-0800-111-999)

0800 111 999

Call the national gas emergency number if you smell gas, suspect a carbon monoxide leak or any other gas emergency.

## Electrical Safety First

[www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk](http://www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk)

[enquiries@electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk).

Voicebank 020 3463 5100

Help and advice regarding electrical safety

**If you would like a copy of this document in a different format or a version in another language, please call 0800 0731 999.**



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