

A Guide to Fire Safety for your Home



شركة نفط البحرين (مغلقة)
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Introduction

A fire can start very easily and can spread with frightening speed. Every year people are killed and many more are injured due to home fire.

This handbook is your essential Do It Yourself (DIY) guide to fire safety. If you follow the sensible advice and suggestions in it, you will significantly reduce the chance of there being a fire in your home. And if there ever is a fire, you'll know how to get everyone out safely.

A lot of the advice is common sense and will only take a few minutes of your time to put into action. In this guide you will also find 12 tips to protect your home, which will:

- help you to identify any potential danger in your home that could cause a fire; and
- refer you to the relevant page in this guide for advice on how to reduce the risk.



Remember if you do have a fire
– however small – get everyone
out of the building and dial **999** for
the Civil Defense

A GUIDE TO FIRE SAFETY FOR YOUR HOME

CONTENTS

Safety in the kitchen.....	1
Using electricity and appliances.....	3
Cigarettes, cigars, and pipes.....	4
Using candles.....	5
Choosing fire safety equipment for your home	6
If you have extra needs.....	7
If you rent your home.....	7
Detecting fire.....	8
Do a bedtime safety check!.....	10
12 tips to protect your home.....	11
Planning your escape.....	11
What to do if there is a fire.....	13
Children.....	15
Fire safety rules for children.....	17

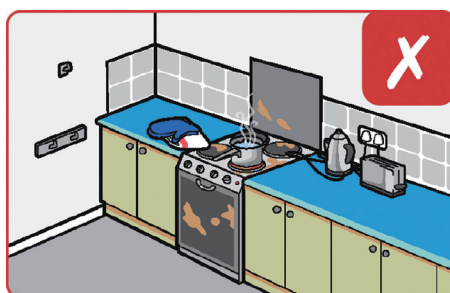
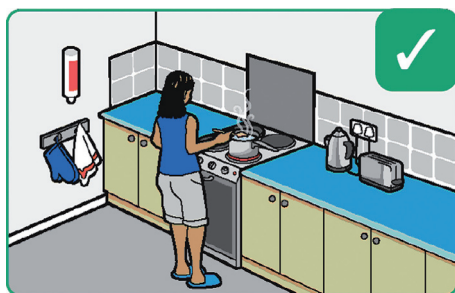


Safety in the kitchen

Most fires in homes start in the kitchen as a result of people being careless with appliances or being distracted for a moment while cooking. Nearly 20 people a day are killed or injured in kitchen fires.

Cooking

- When cooking, take care if you're wearing loose clothing as it can easily catch fire. Keep electrical leads, tea towels and cloths away from the cooker and hob.
- Don't leave pans on the hob when you're not around. Take them off the heat if you have to leave the kitchen.
- Angle saucepan handles so they don't stick out from the hob, or over a naked flame.
- Never leave children alone in the kitchen. Keep matches, lighters and saucepan handles where children can't reach them and fit a safety catch on the oven door.
- Don't put anything that is made of metal or is metallic inside the microwave.
- Keep the oven, hob, toaster and grill clean – a build-up of fat, crumbs or grease can easily catch fire.
- When you have finished cooking, make sure you switch off the oven and hob.
- Don't use matches or lighters to light gas cookers – spark devices, which you can buy from hardware stores, are safer.



Deep-frying food

- If you regularly deep-fry food, consider buying an electric deep-fat fryer. They have thermostats fitted so they can't overheat and are safer to use.
- Dry food before putting it into hot oil, to prevent the oil from splashing and burning you.
- If you don't have an electric deep-fat fryer and are using an ordinary pan, never fill it more than one-third full.
- If the oil starts to smoke, it's too hot. Turn the heat off and leave it to cool.

Treating minor burns

If a burn is bigger than a postage stamp, you should get medical advice from your doctor or call an ambulance. If a burn is smaller than a postage stamp, run cold water over it until the pain reduces and then cover the burn with clean, non-fluffy material.



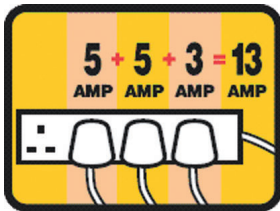
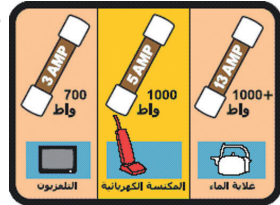
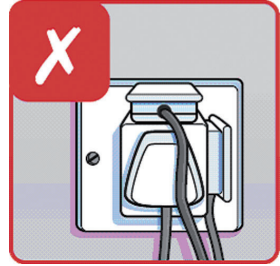
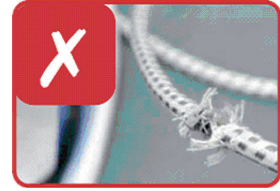
What to do if a pan catches fire

- Don't take any risks – get everyone out of your home and call Civil Defense.
- Don't move the pan and never throw water over it.
- Turn off the heat under the pan (if it's safe to do so) and allow it to cool completely.

Using electricity and appliances

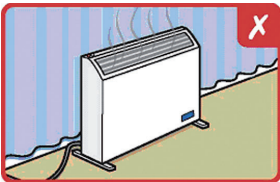
Plugs and cables

- Unplug electrical appliances when you're not using them.
- Don't overload sockets – use one plug in each socket.
- Don't put cables under carpets or mats.
- Make sure that the plug has the correct fuse for the appliance.
- If you have to use an adaptor, use a 'bar type' one with a fuse and keep the total output of all plugs in the adaptor to no more than 13 amps. A kettle alone uses 13 amps.
- Check for signs of loose wiring and faulty plugs or sockets (such as scorch marks or flickering lights), and fix any problems you find.
- Replace any worn or taped-up cables and leads.



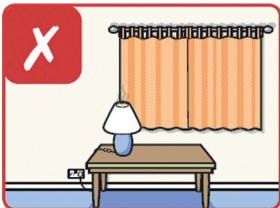
Portable heaters

- Always position heaters so the back is against a wall and they're facing the room. If possible, secure them to the wall to prevent them from falling over.
- Don't place heaters near curtains or furnishings, and never use them for drying clothes.
- Switch heaters off if you're not in the room, and also when you go to bed.



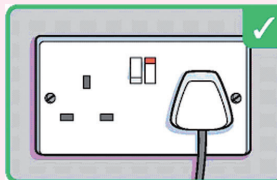
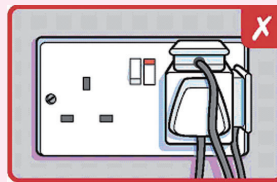
Lights

- As light bulbs get hot, don't place them near curtains and other fabrics.



Looking after electricity and appliances

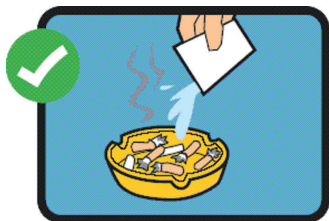
- Keep electrical leads and appliances away from water.
- Turn off electrical appliances when they're not being used and service them regularly.
- Check that the toaster is clean, and empty the crumbs regularly. Make sure it's not near curtains, blinds and kitchen rolls.
- Don't overload electrical sockets. Only have one plug in each socket. If you need more plugs than there are sockets, use a 'bar type' fuse adaptor and keep the total amps of all plugs in the adaptor to 13 amps or less. Also, remember that higher-amp appliances such as washing machines always need a socket to themselves.



Cigarettes, cigars and pipes

More people die in fires caused by smoking than in fires resulting from any other single cause. Tobacco is designed to stay lit, which is why cigarettes can so easily start an accidental fire.

- Take extra care when you're tired or taking prescription drugs. It's very easy to fall asleep without realising that your cigarette is still burning.
- If you need to lie down, don't light up. You could easily doze off and set your bed or sofa on fire.
- Don't leave lit cigarettes, cigars or pipes unattended – they can easily over-balance as they burn down, land on a carpet or newspaper and start a fire. When you put it out, make sure it really is out.
- Every year children die from starting fires with cigarettes, matches and lighters which they shouldn't have. Keep these where children can't reach them.
- Where possible, buy child-resistant lighters and matchboxes.

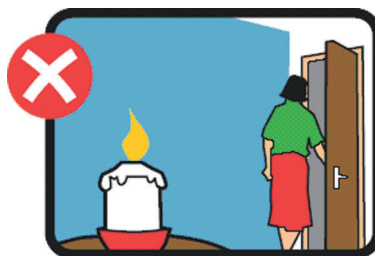
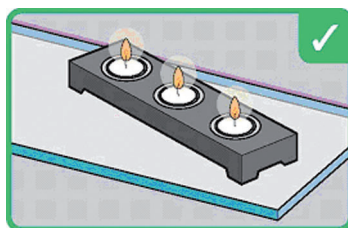


- Use a proper, heavy ashtray which can't tip over easily and is made of a material that won't burn.
- Tap your ash into an ashtray – never a wastebasket – and don't let the ash or cigarette ends build up in the ashtray.

Using candles

Candles start many fires, so you need to be really careful if you have them in your home. A candle flame may be small, but you should treat it as you would any other flame – with care.

- Keep candles where children and pets can't reach them, away from draughts, and away from anything that can easily catch fire (for example, furniture, curtains or newspapers).
- Make sure the candle is standing up straight and is fixed firmly in a proper holder so that it can't fall over. Scented candles turn to liquid in order to release their fragrance, so always burn them in a suitable glass or metal container that can withstand the heat of the liquid and that the liquid cannot leak from.
- Always place candles on a heat-resistant surface. Night lights and tea lights can melt plastic surfaces, such as the top of a TV and the side of a bath tub.
- Don't lean across a candle – you could set your hair or clothes on fire.
- Always leave at least 10 cm (4 inches) between two burning candles and never place them under shelves or other surfaces.
- Don't play with candles (for example, by putting matchsticks or anything else into the hot wax).
- Always put candles out before you move them. Using a 'snuffer' or a spoon is safer than blowing them out, which can send sparks and hot wax flying.



Choosing fire safety equipment for your home

Smoke alarms are essential for every home; however you may feel that you need extra fire safety equipment, perhaps because you live in a remote place. The following section gives information on choosing fire safety equipment.

Fire safety equipment can be helpful in an emergency, but it is important to know how and when to use it. You should only tackle a fire in its early stage, before it starts to spread. Before tackling any fire, make sure that everyone is outside and your escape route is clear. Most of the equipment mentioned in this booklet is inexpensive and is available from safety equipment supply shops. Always read the manufacturer's instructions before using equipment, and only tackle small fires which are in their early stages and have not started to spread.

Smoke alarms

You should have at least one smoke alarm in your home and preferably one on each floor level (storey). Smoke alarms are easy to fit and maintain. If they detect smoke they sound a piercing alarm to warn you of fire.

The best place for smoke alarms is where you can hear them, ideally in hallways and landings. See page 8 for more information.



Fire blankets

These are lightweight sheets of fire-resistant material which are used to cover a fire to cut off its oxygen supply or to wrap around a person whose clothes are on fire. **The best place for a fire blanket is in the kitchen.**

Fire extinguishers

These are pressurised cylinders containing powder, foam or carbon dioxide which shoots out in a jet. Fire extinguishers are quick and simple to use – you point them at the fire and shoot the jet at it. There are different types of extinguishers for different types of fire. Always read the instructions and make sure you have the correct extinguisher for the type of fire. **The best place for an extinguisher is in the hall, so you can take it wherever it's needed.**

If you have extra needs

If you or a member of your household has any difficulty seeing, hearing or moving about the home, you will need to take extra care to deal with the risk of a fire.

If you rent your home

Statistics show that people who live in rented accommodation have a greater chance of having a fire.

One of the problems is that rented accommodation may not always be well maintained. Even if you think it's your landlord's responsibility to take the necessary fire safety precautions, don't leave it to them. If you can't get your landlord to make your house safe, do it yourself– it could save your life.

So fitting a smoke alarm in your own living area is the simplest step you can take to reduce the risk of being caught in a fire. They are inexpensive to buy, easy to install and you can take them with you when you move.

Electrical and furniture safety

Maintain all electrical installations (fixed wiring and so on) and any electrical appliances they provide (cookers, kettles and so on) and make sure they are safe to use; and make sure any furniture and furnishings they provide meet the fire resistance regulations.



Detecting fire

Fires happen when you least expect them, often during the night. They also spread very quickly, damaging property, injuring and killing people. But the real killer is smoke. If you're asleep when a fire starts and you don't have a smoke alarm to wake you, you are unlikely to survive. Smoke suffocates quickly – you could be dead before the flames reach you.

Your first line of defense

If there is a fire, a smoke alarm will immediately warn you, giving you and everyone in your home time to escape to safety. Smoke alarms are cheap, available in most safety equipment supply shops and are easy to fit and maintain.

Choosing a smoke alarm

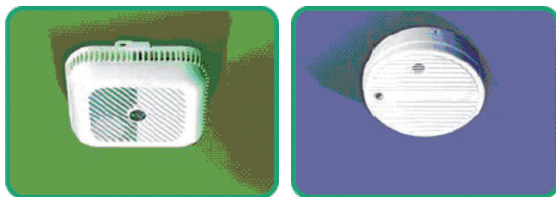
There are a variety of models to choose from, depending on your needs and budget.

The two types

There are two main types of smoke alarm – ionisation alarms and optical alarms.

- Ionisation alarms are the cheapest and the most readily available. They are very sensitive to flaming fires, (ones that burn fiercely such as chip-pan fires) and they will detect this type of fire before the smoke gets too thick.
- Optical alarms are more expensive and more effective at detecting slow-burning fires (such as smouldering foam-filled furniture and overheated wiring). Optical alarms are less likely to go off accidentally, and so are best for ground-floor hallways and for homes on one level.

As both slow-burning and flaming fires are common, for the best protection you should install one of each. However, if you can't have both it's still safer to have one smoke alarm than none at all.



The more alarms you have around your home, the safer you will be.

Where to fit smoke alarms

- Always put smoke alarms where you will be able to hear them throughout the home, particularly when you're asleep or when doors are closed.
- Ideal places are at the top of staircases, on stair landings, and between living and sleeping areas.
- Fit alarms on the ceiling, as near as possible to the centre of the room, hallway or landing. The alarm should be at least 30 cm (12 inches) away from any wall or light.
- If you live on one level, fit the alarm in the hallway between the living and sleeping areas.
- If your home has more than one level, fit one alarm at the bottom of the staircase and further alarms on each landing.

Installing your smoke alarm

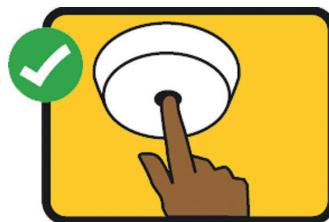
Installing a smoke alarm is easy to do and only takes a few minutes – just follow the manufacturer's instructions.

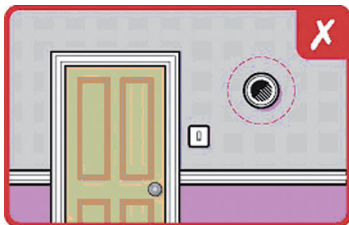
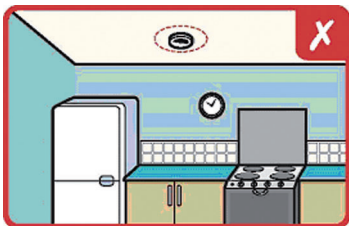
If it's difficult for you to fit a smoke alarm, ask a family member or friend to help you. Don't be tempted to have a go yourself if you feel unsteady or unsure – you could fall and injure yourself.

Maintaining smoke alarms

You must look after your smoke alarms. Every year people are killed in fires because their alarms failed to work because of flat or missing batteries.

- Once a week test the battery by pressing the test button until the alarm sounds. If the alarm ever starts to 'beep' regularly, replace the battery as soon as possible.
- Once a year change the battery (unless it is a 10-year alarm).
- Twice a year open the case and gently vacuum the inside to remove dust from the sensor. If it doesn't open, vacuum through the holes.
- After 10 years it's best to replace your smoke alarm with a whole new unit.





Where not to put a smoke alarm

Don't put a smoke alarm:

- in the kitchen or bathroom, where it could be accidentally triggered by cooking fumes or steam;
- where you can't hear it while you're asleep;
- in a garage, where it could be triggered by exhaust fumes; or
- on a wall. Smoke rises straight up towards the ceiling and will set the alarm off more quickly if the device is fixed to the ceiling – giving you more time to escape.

Do a bedtime safety check!

You are almost three times more likely to be killed in a fire that starts during the night.

- Switch off and unplug all appliances. (Only leave on those appliances that are designed to be left on – for example, DVD players/video recorders, freezers and clock radios.)
- Check that the oven, grill and hob are switched off.
- Don't leave the washing machine, tumble dryer or dishwasher running overnight (they are a fire risk because of their high wattage, friction and motors).
- Turn off all gas and electric heaters, and put a guard in front of an open fire.
- Check that candles are out. Never leave one burning when you go to sleep.
- Make sure that any cigarettes, cigars and pipes have been put out properly, and never smoke in bed. You could fall asleep and accidentally set fire to your bedding.
- Close all doors. By shutting doors you can keep your escape route free from fire. This is particularly important in homes where you would not be able to escape from a window, for example if you live in a high-rise flat.
- Check that your escape route is clear of obstacles and make sure door keys are in the right place.

12 tips to protect your home

1. Fit smoke alarms on each level in your home. Keep them free from dust and test them once a week. Consider buying a 10-year alarm, otherwise change the batteries in your alarm every year.
2. Make a fire action plan so that everyone in your home knows how to escape if there's a fire.
3. Keep the exits from your home clear so that people can escape if there's a fire. Make sure that everyone in your home can easily find the keys for doors.
4. Take extra care in the kitchen – accidents while cooking account for over half of fires in homes. Never leave young children alone in the kitchen.
5. Take extra care when cooking with hot oil. Consider buying a deep-fat fryer which is controlled by a thermostat (if you don't already have one).
6. Never leave lit candles in rooms that nobody is in or in rooms where children are on their own. Make sure candles are in secure holders on a surface that doesn't burn and are away from any materials that could burn.
7. Make sure cigarettes are stubbed out properly and are disposed of carefully, and never smoke in bed.
8. Get into the habit of closing doors at night. If you want to keep a child's bedroom door open, close the doors to the lounge and kitchen. This may well help save their life if there is a fire.
9. Don't overload electrical sockets. Remember one plug for one socket.
10. Keep matches and lighters where children can't see or reach them.
11. Take special care when you're tired or sick.
12. Don't leave the TV or other electrical appliances on standby as this could cause a fire. Always switch them off and unplug when not in use.

Planning your escape

Once a fire starts, it takes hold quickly and spreads even faster. A fire is frightening and it can be difficult to think straight, especially if your hall is filled with smoke and you're worried about getting you and your family out.

On average, people can survive for less than five minutes in a smoke-filled room. Preparing and practicing a plan of action will help you to act quickly if there's a fire – it could even save your life. This section explains how to make an action plan for your home to make sure that everyone gets out safely.

Plan your escape together

- Discuss with everyone how you would get out if there were a fire. When making your plan, take account of everyone in the household, especially children and older or disabled people.
- Talk through your escape plan, and regularly remind people what to do – and what not to do – if there's a fire.
- Put a reminder of what to do somewhere where it's easily seen (for example, on the fridge door or the kitchen notice board).



Choose an escape route

- The best escape route is usually your normal way in and out of your home. Think of any difficulties you or the other people in your household may have getting out.
- Choose a second escape route as well, in case the first one is blocked. Keep all escape routes clear.
- If there are children and older or disabled people in your household, plan how you will get them out and the best order for you all to escape.

Think about creating a safe room

- If you can't escape you will need to find a room where you can wait for help. This is particularly important if you have difficulty moving around or using the stairs.
- If possible, your safe room should have a window which opens and a phone.

Make sure everyone knows where keys are kept

Decide where the keys to doors and windows should be kept and always keep them there. Everyone in the household should know where the keys are kept.

Fire equipment

Fire extinguishers and fire blankets should only be used on a small fire in its early stages and by adults who are absolutely sure they know how and when to use them. The first priority is to keep people safe by getting them out of the building and calling the Fire and Rescue Service.

What to do if there is a fire

Raise the alarm

If the smoke alarm goes off when you're asleep, shout to wake everyone up, get everyone together, follow your escape plan and get out of the building.

- Don't stop to investigate the fire or to collect valuables or pets.
- Use your escape route to get everyone out and meet at an agreed point.
- Close any doors which are open, and only open the doors you need to go through (this will help to stop the fire from spreading so rapidly).
- Check doors with the back of your hand. If a door is warm, don't open it – the fire is on the other side.
- If there is a lot of smoke, crawl along the floor as the air will be cleanest there.
- Once you've got everyone out of the building, use a mobile phone, a neighbor's phone or a phone box to call 999. Give the emergency operator your name and address.
- Don't go back into the building for anything. If there is still someone inside, tell the Civil Defense when they arrive – they'll be able to find the person quicker and more safely than you.
- Find somewhere safe to wait near the building, and give the Civil Defense as much information as possible about the fire and the building.

Escaping from a window

If you're on the ground floor or first floor, you may be able to escape from a window. If you have to break the window, cover the jagged glass with towels or thick bedding.

- Throw bedding out of the window to break your fall.
- Don't jump out of the window – lower yourself down to arm's length and drop to the ground.
- If you have any children, elderly or disabled people with you, plan the order you will escape in so that you can help them down.

How to make a 999 call

999 calls are free. The more information the Civil Defense has, the quicker firefighters can get to you and do their job.

Speak slowly and clearly

- Give the full address of your home, including the town.
- Say what is on fire (for example, a two-storey house or a flat in a high-rise block).

- Explain if anyone is trapped and if so, what room they are in.



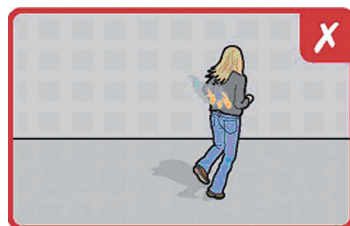
If your escape route is blocked

- 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 and to prevent smoke and fumes from getting into the room.
- Open the window and stay near it for fresh air, and to let the firefighters see where you are.
- If you have a phone, call the Fire and Rescue Service. If you don't have a phone, shout for help so that someone else can phone for you.



What to do if your clothes catch fire

- Don't run around – you'll fan the flames and make them burn faster.
- Lie down and roll around. This smothers the flames and makes it harder for the fire to spread.
- Smother the flames with heavy material, like a coat, a blanket or a fire blanket.



Children

It's a tragic fact that every year many children are killed and more are injured in accidental house fires. This is often because there's no smoke alarm, or because no adult is there to help the children and they don't know what to do.

By taking the safety precautions described in this guide you will be helping to keep your family safe. Young children can be curious about fire and flames, so it's also important to teach them how dangerous fire can be and how quickly it can get out of hand. Don't avoid talking to your children because you don't want to frighten them. If a fire starts without an adult around, children need to know exactly what to do.

- Get them involved with making your escape plan, and practice it regularly to keep it fresh in their minds.
- Make sure babysitters or child minders know about your escape plan, including what to do if there's a fire and where the door and window keys are kept.

Teaching children to be safe with fire

The best way to teach children is by example. Let your children see you being sensible and careful about cooking, candles, smoking and other potential fire risks. You should also:

- encourage your children to tell you if they find matches or lighters;
- encourage older children to be responsible by letting them take part in safe, fire-related activities (for example, lighting a bonfire or candle) under the supervision of an adult; and
- explain to older teenagers the risks of causing a fire from smoking. Even if they don't smoke, they'll probably go to parties where others do. Candles are also popular with many teenagers, so explain how to use them safely.

Teach your children what to do if there's a fire

- If you see smoke or flames, raise the alarm and tell a grown-up straight away.



Make your home safe for children

A child can start a fire in moments, but only if he or she has the means to do so.

- Don't leave children on their own in a room where there's a fire risk.
- Keep matches and lighters where children cannot see or reach them.
- Place candles and tea lights where children cannot reach them.
- Put a childproof fireguard in front of an open fire or heater.
- Don't let children play or leave toys near a fire or heater.
- Put child locks on cupboards containing anything that could be used to start a fire (for example, matches, candles, flammable liquids and so on).
- Keep portable heaters in a safe place where they can't be knocked over when they are being used or stored.
- Keep your escape route clear of toys and other obstructions.
- Never leave children alone in the kitchen when you're cooking, and never let them play near the oven and hob.
- Put plug guards into sockets so children can't stick anything into the holes.



- Get out of the building as soon as possible. Go to a neighbour's house and tell them to call 999 and ask for the Civil Defense.
- If there's smoke, crawl along the floor as the air is cleanest there.
- Never hide in a cupboard or under a bed. You need to raise the alarm and get out.
- If your escape route is blocked, go into a room with a window. Put blankets and towels at the bottom of the door to stop smoke getting in. If there's a phone in the room call 999. If there isn't a phone, open the window and shout for help.
- Don't go back into the building, not even for your toys or pets. Firefighters can search the house much more quickly and safely than you can.



Fire safety rules for children

- You can never play safely with fire – it can get out of control really fast.
- Never play with matches or lighters. If you see matches or lighters lying around, tell a grown-up.
- Never play with a lit candle.
- Don't play close to a fire or a heater, or leave your toys near a fire or heater.
- Don't pull on electric cables or fiddle with electric appliances or sockets.
- Never switch the oven or hob on.
- Don't touch any saucepans on the hob.
- Don't put anything on top of heaters, lamps or other lights.
- If you see a fire, tell a grown-up.

Fire fascinates children

Children can be curious about fire and flames. Some can become obsessed to the point of putting lives in danger – theirs and other people's.

Arson (deliberately starting fires) is a serious problem. If you're responsible for a child, you're legally responsible for any illegal actions carried out by that child. So if you think your child may be lighting fires deliberately, you must do something about it.

