

# Fire Safety Advice for Tenants in Flats (Non-Sheltered)

**If you are living in a sheltered housing scheme please seek advice from your Sheltered Housing Officer.**

**Fire kills!**

**Get out & stay out!**

**Call 999!**

Your home has been fitted with hard wired electric smoke alarms. However, as a tenant there are a number of important measures you can take to prevent the risk of fire.

Make sure you don't leave any objects or combustible items (including furniture, wheelie bins, carpets, curtains or door mats) or any other items on landings or shared stairs which could obstruct the exit route, or promote fire spread within common escape routes; putting your life, your family members and your neighbours lives at risk.

If you live in a block of flats, don't use your balcony as an extra storage space, balconies packed with flammable items can cause a fire to spread much more quickly.

**Please inform your local Housing Office if you are using medical oxygen cylinders in the home. As with other services in the home, for example, domestic gas and electricity, you need to observe a few simple precautions.** There are a number of hazards associated with oxygen and due caution should be given to these during use and storage.

- Make sure your oxygen equipment is stored safely out of direct sunlight, well ventilated, always dry and away from heat sources.
- Don't use oxygen near naked flames, including gas and electric cookers – 3 metres is a safe distance.
- Never smoke or use electrical equipment, such as hairdryers, whilst using oxygen.

Your local Community Environmental Warden will carry out regular checks of communal areas. Please don't be offended if you are asked to move any items – any request will be for your own safety and for those sharing the communal areas. We reserve the right to remove and dispose of any items left in the communal areas without giving you prior notification.

If your flat block has a security door, make sure you close it behind you at all times. Don't open the door to anyone you have not invited and report any anti social activities in your block to your local Housing Office and the Police.

It is important to plan an escape route and be prepared in the event of a fire.

## **STEPS TO SAFETY – PLANNING AN ESCAPE ROUTE**





- 1 Make sure you and your household members are familiar with the fire escape plan, what to do in a fire & all the escape routes. The best escape is down the shared stairs and out of the back or front entrance doors. NEVER use lifts or balconies in the event of any fire.
- 2 Put details of what to do in a fire somewhere prominent in your home to remind your household members of what to do in the event of a fire. Make sure everyone knows where the fire exits are situated.
- 3 Keep all exits & communal areas clear at all times.





- 4 Keep fire doors closed to help prevent the spread of fire and to give you more time to get out. Never tamper with fire doors or remove door closures as these have been fitted to improve your safety.
- 5 Find a room in your home where you can safely go to in the event of a fire, if possible where there is a window and a telephone.
- 6 Keep your property address near your telephone as this will help your children and relatives call for help and provide emergency services with accurate information.
- 7 Keep a good quality torch in your home and within easy reach. Make sure all your household members know where to find it. This will help you leave the building safely during the night if the electricity or lighting fails.
- 8 If any member of your household has a disability which prevents them moving around easily (e.g. sight or hearing problem), make sure you keep any aids that they rely on in a place where they can easily get to them (e.g. walking aids). When you call the emergency services make sure you tell them if anyone has a disability which may affect them moving around easily.
- 9 Count how many doors you need to go through when taking your escape route – it is easy to get confused in smoke or in the dark.
- 10 KEEP CALM AND ACT QUICKLY
- 11 If the fire is **in your flat** and you cannot control it:
  - Before opening any door use the back of your hand to touch it. Don't open it if it feels warm as the fire could be on the other side. If it is not safe for you to leave follow the advice in point 12 below
  - If it is safe to do so, leave immediately and, if possible, close all internal and external doors
  - Do not waste time collecting any valuable items or possessions
  - If possible warn your neighbours
  - Telephone the emergency services
  - Leave the building using the safest escape route
  - If safe to do so, remain on site, outside and a safe distance from the fire and wait for the emergency services to advise them if possible of what caused the fire and where it is located. This will save valuable time, help to save lives and limit the damage.
- 12 If the fire is **in a shared area**:
  - If you know your exit is clear, leave quickly and where possible alert your neighbours
  - Do not waste time collecting any valuable items or possessions
  - If it is not safe for you to leave, take everyone to the safest room in your home
  - Close all external and internal doors where possible
  - Block the bottom of the doors in your safe room with wet clothing to stop smoke getting in
  - If there is a lot of smoke crawl along the floor where the air will be cleaner
  - Open the window and call for help – if you cannot open the window break it as safely as possible
  - Phone the emergency services and tell them what is happening as clearly as possible


- 13 If your clothes catch fire, lie down and roll around or smother the flames with a heavy material. REMEMBER, STOP, DROP AND ROLL!
- 14 If you are on ground floor then it will be easier to get out. If you need to break a window, do so safely and cover any sharp broken glass edges to enable you to climb out safely.
- 15 If you need to get out of a room that is higher than ground floor, then throw some bedding or soft items onto the ground to break your fall. Only attempt this if it is practical to do so and you are within a reasonable height (up to 2 storeys). Never jump from a window! Lower yourself down and then drop at arms length.
- 16 When the emergency services arrive, they will tell you what to do next.
- 17 DO NOT GO BACK INTO THE BUILDING!

The following table lists the most common causes of fire and how you can help to prevent a fire in your home:

The most common causes of fire	What you can do to help prevent the risk of fire in your home
<b>Electrical sockets &amp; appliances</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't overload sockets</li> <li>• Try to only have one plug in each socket</li> <li>• Use extension leads safely</li> <li>• Switch off and unplug electrical items when not in use &amp; before you go to bed (unless they are designed to be left on e.g. your freezer)</li> <li>• Don't try and fix faulty electrics yourself</li> <li>• Report any required repairs as soon as possible</li> </ul>
<b>Cigarette</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stub out cigarettes properly and throw them away carefully</li> <li>• Put them out! Right out!</li> <li>• If possible, wet them and dispose of them in a bin outside your home</li> <li>• NEVER smoke in bed</li> <li>• Keep matches &amp; lighters away from children</li> </ul>
<b>Candles</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make sure they are fully extinguished after use</li> <li>• Don't leave them unattended</li> <li>• Make sure they are put on a safe surface</li> <li>• Put them in a fireproof holder</li> <li>• Keep them away from curtains, fabrics, pets &amp; children</li> </ul>

The most common causes of fire	What you can do to help prevent the risk of fire in your home
<p><b>Kitchens</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Turn off cookers &amp; ovens when not in use</li> <li>• Don't leave children alone in the kitchen when cooking</li> <li>• Make sure saucepan handles are out of reach from children and free from any interference</li> <li>• Take care when cooking with hot oil</li> <li>• Keep tea towels, cloths &amp; kitchen roll away from the cooking area</li> <li>• Take care if you are wearing loose clothing, they can easily catch fire</li> <li>• Keep the cooking appliances clean and in good working order as a build up of fat and grease can ignite a fire</li> <li>• Don't put anything metal in a microwave</li> </ul>
<p><b>Smoke Alarms</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make sure you test your smoke alarms regularly and tell us about any problems</li> <li>• NEVER cover up your smoke alarms</li> <li>• Report any damage immediately</li> </ul>
<p><b>Gas Appliances</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make sure you give us access to carry out the yearly checks on your gas central heating system &amp; appliance</li> <li>• Always use a Gas Safe registered engineer if you install your own appliances</li> <li>• Keep clothing, furniture and other inflammable items away from heating appliances</li> <li>• Don't use heaters to dry clothing</li> <li>• Ensure heaters are turned off properly when not in use</li> <li>• Use a guard if necessary to ensure the safety of children, pets, etc.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Litter, cardboard, bulky furniture, rubbish, etc.</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Always dispose of any items in the appropriate bins provided</li> <li>• Store any bulky items in a safe location until they are removed for disposal</li> <li>• When a bulky items collection is booked, the items need to be placed out for collection by 6am on the morning of the advised collection date. They must be kept dry and should be placed safely outside your home to avoid any tripping hazards, entrances and steps.</li> </ul>

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<p><b>Alcohol/Medication</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drink safely – take special care when you have been drinking</li> <li>• Don't attempt to cook if you are under the influence of alcohol</li> <li>• Be extra careful if you are taking medication which can make you drowsy</li> </ul>
<p><b>Fireworks</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be safe</li> <li>• Never play with fireworks</li> <li>• If possible go to an organised display</li> <li>• Set off any fireworks in a safe location and a safe distance from your home</li> <li>• Wear gloves when using sparklers</li> <li>• Keep children well away from harm or injury</li> <li>• Keep pets indoors</li> <li>• Dispose of used fireworks safely</li> <li>• If possible, wet them and dispose of them in a bin outside your home</li> </ul>
<p><b>Bonfires</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advise your neighbours if you have to light a bonfire</li> <li>• Only burn dry materials</li> <li>• Never burn household rubbish, rubber, or anything containing plastic, foam or paint</li> <li>• Never use petrol, oil or any other similar fuel to ignite a fire</li> <li>• Avoid lighting fires in unsuitable weather conditions e.g. a windy climate can change the direction of the fire and smoke</li> <li>• Keep pets and children safely away from any risk of danger</li> </ul>
<p><b>Household items</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Always ensure your furniture has the fire-resistant label</li> <li>• Don't leave electric blankets folded as this damages the internal wiring – roll them up</li> <li>• Unplug electric blankets before going to bed</li> <li>• Secure portable heaters up against a wall to prevent them falling over</li> <li>• Keep portable heaters away from curtains &amp; furniture and safely away from children &amp; pets</li> <li>• Keep door and window keys in easy reach and where everyone can find them</li> <li>• Close inside doors at night to stop fire spreading</li> </ul>

The most common causes of fire	What you can do to help prevent the risk of fire in your home
<p><b>Action Plan &amp; Escape Route</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make an action plan so that everyone in your home knows how to escape safely in the event of a fire</li> <li>• Make sure everyone is clear about what to do</li> <li>• Have a clear escape route</li> <li>• Practice the plan and escape route regularly</li> </ul>

## BEDTIME CHECK LIST

Some simple fire safety checks can save your life. Here's what to keep an eye out for:

- ✓ Close inside doors at night to stop a fire from spreading
- ✓ Turn off and unplug electrical appliances unless they are designed to be left on
- ✓ Check your cooker is turned off
- ✓ Don't leave the washing machine, tumble dryer or dishwasher on overnight and unattended
- ✓ Don't leave mobile phones, tablets or e-cigarettes charging overnight
- ✓ Turn heaters off and put up fireguards
- ✓ Put candles, incense sticks and oil burners out and never leave them burning when you are asleep
- ✓ Make sure cigarettes are completely out – wet them to be sure
- ✓ Never smoke in bed
- ✓ Make sure exits are kept clear
- ✓ Keep doors & window keys where everyone can find them
- ✓ If you or anyone else in the home has mobility issues, ensure mobility aids and methods of calling for help (like emergency pendants) are close to hand in case help is needed to assist with an escape

**If you have any questions relating to your safety, please contact your local fire service for free advice.**