



Fire Safety

Statistics show that you are six times more likely to die in a fire if you live in a home without a working smoke alarm

We want you to be safe from the risk of fire in your home

Smoke alarms and fire detection

The best way to protect yourself from fire is to have a smoke alarm – it will give you early warning of a fire in your home. We provide smoke alarms in all our homes. Your home should have a smoke alarm fitted on every floor. If it hasn't, let us know straight away and we will fit them for you. We will service, clean and test your smoke alarm(s) every year.

Do:

- ✓ Dust your smoke alarm regularly.
- ✓ Check your smoke alarm weekly to make sure it is working by pressing the test button.
- ✓ Contact us if your smoke alarm bleeps for any reason other than smoke or fire in your home.
- ✓ Contact us if you have any other problems with your smoke alarm.



Don't:

- ✗ Remove a working battery from your smoke alarm.
- ✗ Paint over or remove the smoke alarm.
- ✗ Cover your smoke alarm.



If you decide to fit extra smoke alarms:

Do:

- ✓ Check with us first to ensure your ceiling doesn't contain asbestos.
- ✓ Position them on the ceiling in the middle of the room.

Don't:

- ✗ Put smoke alarms in or near kitchens or bathrooms because every day steam and smoke can set them off by accident.



Fire safety in sheltered schemes

If you live in one of our sheltered schemes your Scheme Coordinator will check your Fire Alarm system weekly. If your smoke or heat alarm goes off it will automatically contact the helpline call centre or will contact the Fire Brigade on your behalf.

If you live in a block of flats or a sheltered housing scheme, we carry out the following regular fire safety checks:

- Emergency lighting (where applicable) – monthly
- Fire appliances e.g. fire hoses and fire extinguishers (where applicable) – annually
- Fire alarm systems (where applicable) – annually
- Fire risk assessments – annually

We will take any action needed to ensure these systems are working properly and comply with the latest standards.

London Fire Brigade also carry out audits from time to time to ensure that everything is up to standard and to recommend any new best practice.

Statutory testing for council properties

Harrow Council is carrying out a programme of electrical testing and gas safety checks to ensure that they are safe and meet the current safety standards.

How to prevent common fires

In the kitchen

When you are cooking, make sure you:

- ✓ Ensure saucepan handles don't stick out from the cooker where they could be accidentally knocked off.
- ✓ Don't wear loose clothing when cooking as it could easily catch fire.
- ✓ Keep your cooker clean and free from fat and grease which can catch light and cause a fire.
- ✓ Turn off the heat and leave the oil to cool down if it starts to smoke – it's too hot.
- ✓ Use a thermostat controlled electric deep fat fryer, which cannot over heat rather than hot oil in a saucepan which can easily overheat and catch fire.
- ✓ Keep the oil to below one third of the height of the pan if you do use a saucepan, and make sure food is dry before placing it in the hot oil – it could splash and spit hot oil on you.
- ✓ Never try to put an oil pan fire out with water as you risk getting burned by the hot oil.
- ✓ Never take a burning saucepan outside as oxygen will feed the fire and make it worse. Just get out, stay out and call 999.
- ✓ Take the pans off the heat or turn down the heat under the pans, if you have to leave the kitchen whilst cooking.
- ✓ Keep tea towels and cloths away from the cooker.
- ✓ Double check the cooker is off when you have finished cooking.

Be aware of electrical appliances:

- ✗ Use spark devices rather than matches or lighters to light gas cookers because they don't have a naked flame.
- ✗ Keep electrical leads and appliances away from water.
- ✗ Keep toasters clean and away from curtains and kitchen rolls.
- ✗ Don't put anything metallic in the microwave.

Be extra careful with children:

- ✗ Keep matches out of children's reach.
- ✗ Whilst cooking do not leave young children in the kitchen on their own.

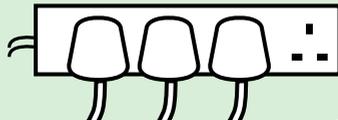
Avoid common electrical fires

Carry out the following good habits around the home:

- ✓ Always check that you use the right fuse to prevent your plug overheating.
- ✓ Make sure your electrical appliances have a British or European safety mark.
- ✓ Use one plug per socket rather than using adaptors or extension leads. High powered appliances such as washing machines should always have a single plug and plug socket for themselves.
- ✓ Keep electrical appliances clean and in good working order to prevent them causing a fire.
- ✓ Look for signs of dangerous or loose wiring such as scorch marks, hot plugs and sockets, flickering lights, fuses that blow or circuit breakers that trip for no obvious reason. If in doubt, contact Access Harrow on 020 8901 2630 if you have any issues, and they will send out an electrician to investigate.
- ✓ Unplug appliances that you are not using, to reduce the risk of fire and save on your electricity costs.
- ✓ Unplug electric blankets before going to bed if they don't have a thermostatic control for safe all night use. Replace electric blankets as soon as they start showing signs of wear.
- ✓ Do not leave or hang clothes within a metre of a heater.
- ✓ Ensure portable heaters can't be knocked over.
- ✓ Do not overload an extension lead or adaptor - check its limit e.g. an extension limit may be 13 amp into which you would not want to put 4 x 5 amp appliances, as this adds up to 20 amps.

Know the limit!

$$\begin{array}{cccc} 5 & + & 5 & + & 3 & = & 13 \\ \text{AMP} & & \text{AMP} & & \text{AMP} & & \text{AMP} \end{array}$$



If there is an electrical fire:

- Pull out the plug or switch off the power at the fuse box.
- If available, smother the appliance with a fire blanket or use a dry powder or CO2 extinguisher.

 NEVER THROW WATER ON AN ELECTRICAL FIRE

Avoid common cigarette fires

Do:

- ✓ Stub cigarettes out properly and dispose of them carefully in metal bins which don't already have things in them that could catch fire.
- ✓ Use a proper ashtray, which cannot tip over and is made of a material that will not burn. Empty ashtrays regularly.
- ✓ Keep matches and lighters away from children, consider buying child resistant lighters and matchboxes.
- ✓ Take special care if you're tired or have been drinking, or if you are on prescription drugs which can cause tiredness.



Don't:

- ✗ Smoke in bed.
- ✗ Leave a lit cigarette, cigar or pipe lying around, it could easily fall over and start a fire.

Avoid common candle fires

Be sure to:

- ✓ Put candles and incense sticks in a proper holder.
- ✓ Use a snuffer or a spoon to put out candles, it's safer than blowing them out which could result in flying sparks.

Never:

- ✗ Leave children alone with candles.
- ✗ Leave lit candles unattended.



Make an escape plan

If a fire occurs in your home and the power fails, you will have to get out in dark and smoky conditions. Escaping from a fire is a lot easier if you have planned an escape route and are familiar with the features along it.

Do:

- ✓ Make sure everyone in your home knows where the door and window keys are kept.
- ✓ Make sure exits are kept clear.
- ✓ Identify a quick and easy route out of your home.
- ✓ Think of another route in case the first one is blocked.
- ✓ Make sure everyone living with you knows what to do in a fire.

What to do if there is a fire

If you live in a flat (sheltered or otherwise) and the fire or smoke is not in your home

Do:

- ✓ Stay in your home until told that it is safe to leave, or you are told to evacuate.
- ✓ Close all doors behind you.
- ✓ Move towards a window, so that you can be seen from the outside.
- ✓ Get ready to be evacuated e.g. get dressed, collect house keys etc.
- ✓ Wait for the Senior Fire Officer to decide if and when to evacuate the building.
- ✓ In the case of sheltered schemes the Fire Brigade will have a list of all the residents who need help.
- ✓ Leave by the safest route and report to the assembly point in the car park.
- ✓ Stay at the assembly point until the Senior Fire Officer tells you what to do next.

Don't:

- ✗ Use the lift.
- ✗ Let visitors through the communal door entry system unless they are emergency personnel needing to get into the building.
- ✗ Leave your home until told that it is safe to do so.
- ✗ Go out into the corridors to investigate.
- ✗ Block corridors (keep escape routes clear at all times).

If there's a fire in your home DON'T TACKLE THE FIRE YOURSELF!

Do:

- ✓ Keep calm and leave immediately, closing all doors behind you.
- ✓ Crawl out at ground level if smoke is making it difficult for you to breathe – smoke tends to rise and breathing should be easier the closer you are to the ground.
- ✓ Check doors before opening them, with the back of your hand. If it's warm, don't open it – the fire is on the other side.
- ✓ Dial 999, ask for the Fire and Rescue Service and tell them your home address and location.
- ✓ Go to a place of safety outside and stay there until told what to do by the Senior Fire Officer on the scene.

Don't:

- ✗ Waste time investigating what's happened or rescuing valuables.

If you are trapped by the fire or smoke

- ✔ Try to take refuge in a room with a window or external door that isn't affected by fire or smoke
- ✔ Make sure you close the door behind you to delay the fire.
- ✔ If you can, place a wet piece of clothing or towel across the bottom of the door to prevent smoke getting in.
- ✔ If there is an exit door or window from the room, use it to escape.
- ✔ If the window is locked, use a large heavy object to break the window in the bottom corner. Use a blanket or coat to cover the edge so that you don't cut yourself
- ✔ If you can safely escape from the window, do so. Remember to avoid jumping from a window, lower yourself down to arms length and drop to the ground.
- ✔ If escape through the window is impractical, then wait by the window with your head in fresh air until help arrives.