

FIRE SAFETY ADVICE

The best way to stay safe from fire is to understand the common risks and how to reduce them in your home.



TOP TIPS

These are the top 10 fire safety tips from Essex County Fire and Rescue Service:

- 1 Make sure you have smoke alarms on every floor of your home
- 2 Smoke alarms save lives, but only if they are working. Please test smoke alarms monthly
- 3 Take extra care in the kitchen and never leave cooking unattended
- 4 Take extra care when cooking with hot oil. It's safest to avoid using chip pans, or any pans filled with hot oil, altogether
- 5 Don't overload electric sockets – most can only take a maximum of 13 amps
- 6 Keep matches and lighters away from children
- 7 Keep clothes well away from heaters and open fires
- 8 Put out cigarettes properly and dispose of them carefully
- 9 Don't charge devices like mobile phones, tablets or e-cigarettes overnight, or longer than the recommended charging time
- 10 Plan an escape route and make sure everyone in the house knows how to get out in the event of a fire



KITCHEN FIRE SAFETY

More fires start in the kitchen than any other room in the home. Over half the house fires in the UK start with somebody cooking so it is vital to make sure you know how to stay safe in the kitchen. These are the best ways to reduce risk:

- Never leave cooking unattended. If you have to leave the kitchen take pans off the heat while you are out of the room
- Never leave children alone in the kitchen with food cooking on the hob and keep saucepan handles, matches and lighters out of their reach at all times
- Take care to keep loose clothes and tea towels away from the cooker and hob
- Make sure all cooking appliances are switched off when you've finished cooking
- Never try to cook if you've enjoyed a night out drinking. It is far safer to get a takeaway on the way home than attempt to cook under the influence of alcohol

If your pan catches fire:

- Never throw water over it
- Don't take any risks – turn off the heat if it's safe to
- Don't tackle the fire yourself. Get out, close the kitchen door and dial 999



Cooking with electrical appliances

- ▲ Keep appliances and leads away from water
- ▲ Make sure toasters are clean and away from curtains and kitchen roll
- ▲ Keep microwaves, ovens, hobs and grills clean and in good working order. A build-up of fat and grease can ignite a fire
- ▲ Don't plug air fryers into extension leads and don't overfill them
- ▲ Place slow cookers on flat, heat-proof, stable surfaces
- ▲ Be careful when buying secondhand – get the appliance checked over if you can
- ▲ Don't ignore your electric or fuse tripping. Tripping electric is a warning sign – work out what caused it to trip and get it checked out

ELECTRICAL FIRE SAFETY

Make sure your appliances are safe, used correctly and sockets are not overloaded.

How to avoid electrical fires:

- Never overload plug sockets
- Make sure your appliances have the British or European safety mark when you buy them
- Always use the right fuse to prevent appliances from overheating
- Keep an eye out for signs of dangerous or loose wires such as scorch marks, hot plugs and blown fuses or tripped circuit breakers
- Check and replace old and worn cables or leads, especially those hidden behind or under furniture
- Unplug electrical blankets before you get into bed. Make sure to check electric blankets regularly for signs of wear and tear
- Only use one adaptor per socket. Don't plug one adaptor into another. Ideally try to keep to one plug per socket
- Try to secure any portable heaters against the wall so they don't topple and make sure they are well away from curtains and other furniture. Never use portable heaters to dry clothes
- Make sure you always use a qualified tradesperson to carry out electrical works

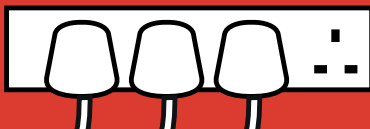
Never overload plug sockets.

Remember no more than 13 amps to a socket.

Know the limit!

$$5 + 5 + 3 = 13$$

AMP AMP AMP AMP



Appliances use different amounts of power – a television may use three amps and a vacuum cleaner five. If you are using an adaptor be careful not to overload it.

Charger Safety

- ⚠ Don't leave items on charge or plugged in overnight or whilst you are out of the house
- ⚠ Never leave chargers plugged in and turned on when they are not in use
- ⚠ Avoid leaving items on charge for long periods of time
- ⚠ Only use the charger supplied by the manufacturer
- ⚠ Look out for the CE mark that indicates chargers comply with European Safety standard

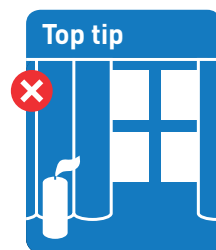


CANDLES

Candles are not an unusual sight in homes, they can be used to add a warm glow and pleasant aroma but it is important to remember that naked flames create risk and candles should be treated with care.

These tips will help everyone enjoy candles safely:

- Consider swapping wax candles for LED candles, they are much safer and give the same warm glow
- Make sure candles are secured in a proper holder and are away from flammable materials, such as curtains
- Never leave children alone with lit candles
- Put candles out when you leave the room and make sure they're put out completely at night
- Keep the wax pool clear of wick trimmings, matches and debris
- Keep the wick short by trimming it. Long or crooked wicks can cause uneven burning, dripping or flaring
- Don't move candles once they are lit
- Follow the manufacturer's recommendations on burn time and proper use
- Do not burn several candles close together as this might cause flaring (mainly with tealights)



Never leave candles unattended

CARRY OUT AN ONLINE SAFETY CHECK

essex-fire.gov.uk/online



MAKE SURE YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO IN THE EVENT OF A FIRE

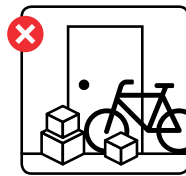
When fire strikes every second counts, so knowing how you plan to get your family safely out of your home could mean the difference between a close shave and tragedy.

That is why it is important to make sure your escape route is as simple as possible. Make a plan, practice it with your family and friends and make sure you keep your escape route clear.

Here are some simple steps for you to follow.

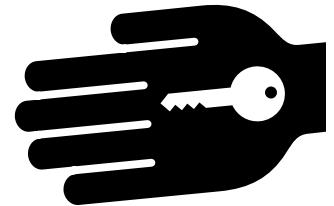
- Plan a safe escape
- Plan an escape route and make sure everyone knows how to get out
- Make sure exits are kept clear

- The best route is the normal way in and out of your home
- Plan a second route in case the first one is blocked
- Take a few minutes to practise your escape plan
- Review your plan if the layout of your home changes
- Keep door and window keys where everyone can find them



If fire strikes in your home you need to get out, stay out and call the fire service out:

- ⚠ Keep calm and act quickly to get everyone out as soon as possible
- ⚠ Don't waste time investigating what's happened or trying to rescue pets or valuables
- ⚠ If there is smoke, keep low where the air is clearer
- ⚠ Before you open a door check if it's warm. If it is don't open it – there's a fire on the other side
- ⚠ Call 999 as soon as you are clear of the building. 999 calls are free



CARBON MONOXIDE

Carbon monoxide poisoning is often called the silent killer as, without a carbon monoxide detector, it's difficult to detect the poisonous gas.

We recommend having a working carbon monoxide detector if you have a gas boiler, gas appliances, an open fire or a log burner in your home.

You can buy a carbon monoxide detector from most DIY stores and major supermarkets.

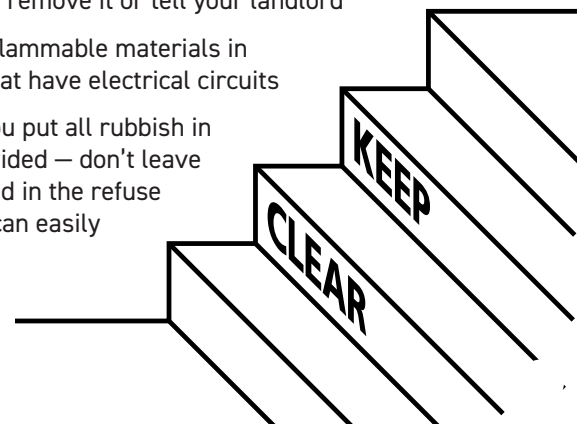


FIRE SAFETY ADVICE IN BLOCKS OF FLATS INCLUDING SHELTERED ACCOMMODATION

The best way to keep flats safe from the risk of fire is to take precautions to stop any fire from breaking out in the first place by following this advice.

There are a few things you can do to help:

- 1 Never store prams, bicycles or mobility scooters in communal areas. Thurrock Council operates a sterile communal area policy, including drying and bin rooms
- 2 Never obstruct the communal areas, which often form the fire escape route for the block
- 3 Never prop open fire doors in communal areas
- 4 Never clutter the stairs, corridors and landings with personal items or things that can set fire easily
- 5 If you see anything in the communal areas that doesn't belong there, remove it or tell your landlord
- 6 Never store flammable materials in cupboards that have electrical circuits
- 7 Make sure you put all rubbish in the bins provided – don't leave it lying around in the refuse area as this can easily be set on fire



FIRE SAFETY ADVICE IN BLOCKS OF FLATS INCLUDING SHELTERED ACCOMMODATION

In the event of a fire in blocks of flats, Thurrock Council operates a 'Stay Put' policy, which means you should not evacuate unless the fire is inside your flat or you are affected by heat or smoke. Please ensure that you and your family are aware of the 'Stay Put' policy. If you have any questions please contact your Estate Officer or Sheltered Housing Manager as soon as possible.

Fire Action Notices are displayed in the entrances to the blocks. Please make sure you have read and understood them.

If there is a fire in your flat			
Follow your escape plan. Get everyone out, and stay out	Call 999 – NEVER assume that someone else has done so	Close all doors behind you as you leave	Use the nearest stairs or fire exit. Do not use the lift

If trapped in your flat by fire		
Call 999 – NEVER assume that someone else has done so	Tell the fire service your flat and floor number	Get everyone to the safest room – furthest from smoke and heat

If there is a fire, but not in your flat			
Close all of your doors and windows	Call 999 – NEVER assume that someone else has done so	Stay put, unless advised by the fire service	If the fire service needs to evacuate, they will knock door-to-door

Keep your building safe

Do not leave mobility scooters, rubbish, bikes, pushchairs, large plants, shoes or other belongings in the communal areas. Any items left in communal areas which breach Fire Safety Regulations will be removed without notice because they could prevent someone from escaping if there is a fire.

Fire doors on flats

Flat doors that open onto communal hallways or landings must, by law, be fire resistant. That means that when they are closed they will keep smoke out and can resist fire for at least 30 minutes. We fit all of our flats with fire doors which have self-closing mechanisms on them, so there is no need for you to remember to close them behind you.

You should make sure that your fire door is kept closed and that the self-closing mechanism has not been tampered with.

We will inspect all fire doors in buildings over five storeys tall at least once a year.

If your door is damaged in any way then do not hesitate to report it to us by calling 0800 074 0169. You can also email your building safety manager at buildingsafetymgr@thurrock.gov.uk

Communal doors

The communal doors within your block or building are also fire doors. These too should be kept closed at all times unless they have a magnetic hold open device fitted, as these doors are linked to the fire detection systems and have been designed to close automatically.

More information about fire doors can be found online at: www.essex-fire.gov.uk/fire-safety-legislation

E-BIKES AND E-SCOOTERS

We recommend that no one keeps e-scooters or e-bikes in their home.

There are fire safety concerns linked to the charging and storage of the lithium-iron batteries which power them.

When an e-scooter/bike is involved in a fire, it can release large volumes of smoke, get very hot, and sometimes have a violent reaction leading to a rapidly developing fire.

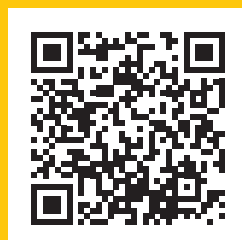
Please remember that e-scooters are illegal to use on roads or in public places, doing so could lead to you being issued with an on-the-spot fine and points on your driving licence.



REQUEST A HOME FIRE SAFETY VISIT FROM ESSEX COUNTY FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

Phone: 0300 303 0088 (9.30am - 4pm, or leave a message out of hours)

essex-fire.gov.uk/book



MAKING A COMPLAINT

If you are dissatisfied with the level of service you have received from Thurrock Council, or any contractor working on our behalf, please let us know.

Firstly you can report repairs or raise issues you are having in your home by calling **0800 074 0169** or emailing **repairs@thurrock.gov.uk**

If you are unhappy with the way issues you have raised have been dealt with, you can make a formal complaint. More information about how to do this can be found on our website at: **thurrock.gov.uk/complaints**

Complaints about housing services, where the council is the landlord, will be managed by the Housing Ombudsman. The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman investigates complaints about allocations, homelessness and private sector housing.

The Ombudsman Services may be able to assist you with your complaint by allowing you the opportunity to engage with the Ombudsman's dispute support advisors. Information can be found on their websites at:

Housing Ombudsman: **housing-ombudsman.org.uk**

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman: **lgo.org.uk**

NEED HELP WITH THE COST OF LIVING?

More information about the help available can be found on our website at: **thurrock.gov.uk/costofliving**

KEY CONTACTS

To report a repair or for information about an existing repair – call **0800 074 0169**, email **repairs@thurrock.gov.uk** or go to **thurrock.gov.uk/repairs**

To report a fire safety concern or for general information about fire safety – **HousingTechnicalServ@thurrock.gov.uk**

To report a building, or fire safety concern, in a high-rise building – **buildingsafetymgr@thurrock.gov.uk**

If you are concerned that someone is creating a fire risk near your home – **01375 652 652** or **housing@thurrock.gov.uk**

For Careline & caretaker queries – **01375 372 468**