

# FIRE SAFETY ADVICE

FOR THURROCK TENANTS  
AND LEASEHOLDERS



 [thurrock.gov.uk](http://thurrock.gov.uk)

## DID YOU KNOW...?

- You're **four times** more likely to die in a fire if you don't have a smoke alarm that works
- **Around half** of home fires are caused by cooking accidents
- **Two fires** a day are started by candles
- Every **six days** someone dies from a fire caused by a cigarette
- About **two fires** a day are started by heaters
- Faulty electrics (appliances, wiring and overloaded sockets) cause around **6,000** fires in the home across the country every year



**IN THE EVENT OF A FIRE,  
GET OUT, STAY OUT  
AND CALL 999**

# FIRE SAFETY ADVICE

This fire safety leaflet provides advice on how to keep your family and home safe from the potentially devastating consequences of a fire in your home.

By taking a few simple precautions you can make sure you are safe from the risks posed by fire. Read on to learn the best way you can stay safe.

## **These are the top ten 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

## Take care with electrics

- ▲ Keep appliances and leads away from water
- ▲ Make sure toasters are clean and away from curtains and kitchen roll
- ▲ Keep ovens, hobs and grills clean and in good working order. A build-up of fat and grease can ignite a fire
- ▲ Never put anything metal in the microwave, always follow the manufacturer's recommendations

## 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

## Take extra care with hot oil, it can catch fire easily:

- ▲ If the oil starts to smoke it is too hot, turn off the heat and let it cool
- ▲ Make sure food is dry before putting it in the oil so it doesn't splash

# ELECTRICAL FIRE SAFETY

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

## How to avoid electrical fires:

- Always use the right fuse to prevent appliances from overheating
- Make sure your appliances have the British or European safety mark when you buy them
- 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 appliances when you aren't using them and when you go to bed
- Unplug electrical blankets before you get into bed. Make sure to check electric blankets regularly for signs of wear tear
- 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

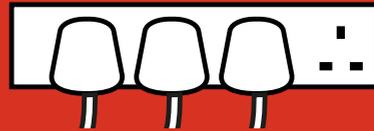
## Never overload plug sockets.

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 adapter be careful not to overload it.

- Make sure you always use a competent and qualified trades person to carry out electrical works
- Never leave devices charging unattended for long periods. Always use the charger that came with your phone, tablet, e-cigarette or mobile device. Never mix-and-match chargers and devices

# CIGARETTES

Cigarettes are a major cause of fires in the home. If you smoke make sure to put them out and dispose of them properly.

- Never smoke in bed
- Use a proper ashtray, never a wastepaper basket. Remember to empty your ashtray when it's full
- Don't leave lit cigarettes, cigars or pipes laying around, they can easily fall over and start a fire
- Take extra care if you smoke when you are tired, taking prescription drugs, using paraffin, petroleum or oil based creams or if you've been drinking. You might fall asleep with a cigarette lit and start a fire
- Keep matches and lighters out of the reach of children
- Consider buying childproof lighters and matches
- Never leave e-cigarettes charging unattended for long periods and only use the charger supplied
- Make sure e-cigarettes carry the relevant CE safety certification



**Put them out.  
Right out!**

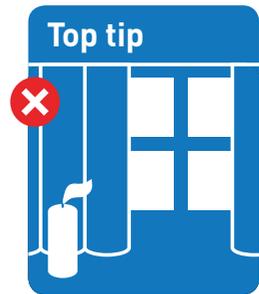


# CANDLES

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:

- Make sure candles are secured in a proper holder and are away from materials that may catch fire like curtains
  - Children should not be left 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 at all times
  - Burn candles in a well-ventilated room, but avoid drafts, vents or air currents. This will help prevent rapid or uneven burning, sooting and excessive dripping
  - Trim the wick to ¼ inch each time before burning. 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 tea-lights)
  - Use a snuffer or a spoon to put out candles. It's safer than blowing them out when sparks can fly



**Never leave  
candles unattended**

# 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.

- Test smoke alarms on each level of your home monthly
- Prepare an escape route, make sure everyone knows it and practice your escape
- Keep your escape route clear so there are no obstacles to slow you down
- Make sure everyone in the house – including friends and family who may stay over – knows where all keys to doors and windows are kept

**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



**Plan an escape route**



# 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 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 the advice in this booklet.

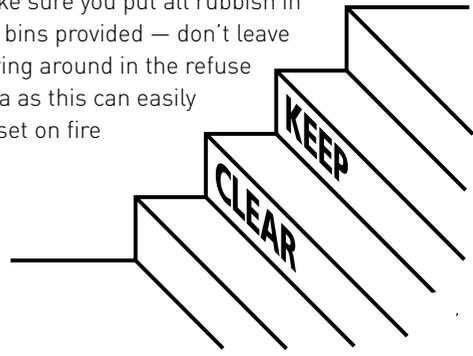
If a fire does break out it's important that people are warned, escape routes are clear and doors are closed to prevent the spread of fire and smoke.

Smoke detectors are the most effective way of protecting against the risk of fire in the home. They give vital early warning at the first sign of fire letting everyone know to get out. Mains wired detectors are the safest. They are fitted to all homes at the start of tenancy so if you don't have one please report it. If you are a leaseholder it is your responsibility to ensure your property has working smoke detectors on each floor level.

Doors stop the spread of fire and smoke. Make sure all doors close properly, never remove internal doors and always close them at night. Your front door will stop smoke and flames so it is one of the most important ways to protect you and your neighbours. You should never alter or remove any doors, especially your front door, without taking advice on the implications it would have on fire safety.

### 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 RISKS OUTSIDE YOUR HOME

It is important to be aware of potential fire risks. They could be different depending on whether you live in a flat or a house.

If you are concerned that someone is creating a fire risk near your home, contact **Thurrock Council on 01375 652 652 or [housing@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:housing@thurrock.gov.uk)**

## **Examples of potential fire risk in flats include:**

- Anyone storing flammable liquids (such as petrol or engine oil) in their flat. The storage and/or use of petrol, paraffin or bottled gas in flats is prohibited by the tenancy agreement
- If you suspect neighbours have altered or tampered with their electrical supply which could cause a fire. This is especially true in cases where flats are used to cultivate cannabis which presents a serious fire risk
- Evidence of vandalism or arson activity is a risk. Evidence may be burn marks in lifts or communal areas, and perhaps a residue of burnt materials. These are clear signs of arson which is a major cause of fires in the UK
- Stairs and communal corridors blocked by rubbish or other residents' property, such as bikes, plants, and furniture can prevent people from escaping in the event of a fire

## **Examples of potential fire risk in a house:**

- Bonfires and barbeques are clear risks of fire. You should always be careful and follow supplier's instructions for the use of barbeques and any fire lighters
- The storage of petrol and propane gas cylinders in houses, gardens or outbuildings is also a risk. The storage of petrol or other motor fuels is prohibited by tenancy agreements
- If you suspect a neighbour of hoarding things, such as old boxes, newspapers and magazines, old furniture either in their home or garden and outbuildings, this could be a risk of fire



**IN THE EVENT OF A FIRE,  
GET OUT, STAY OUT  
AND CALL 999**

For further fire safety information contact your local fire and rescue service (not 999).

**ESSEX COUNTY FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE**  
[www.essex-fire.gov.uk](http://www.essex-fire.gov.uk)

Contact us for further help:

- **Email us at [housing@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:housing@thurrock.gov.uk)**
- **Visit [thurrock.gov.uk/firesafety](http://thurrock.gov.uk/firesafety)**

