

**Working together
for a safer Scotland**



Supporting Fire Safety in the Home



A Carers Guide

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service have identified a number of health and lifestyle behaviours that increase the likelihood of being involved in a fire. As part of our commitment to building a safer Scotland we offer everyone in Scotland a free home fire safety visit to identify risks and reduce them by putting preventative measures in place.

Do you have fire safety concerns about someone you care for?

Factors may include burn marks found within the home, cooking regularly being left unattended, poor housekeeping or an accumulation of possessions that restricts escape routes. Having an alcohol dependency, suffering from mobility issues or due to health reasons they are less able to react or understand a situation.

Many of us know a friend, relative, neighbour or client, often living alone, who could be vulnerable from fire. If you know someone who could be at risk from fire, please tell them about Home Fire Safety Visits and submit a referral to the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service. The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service will work with you to make sure that the person is safe in their own home.

Requesting a home fire safety visit for the person you care for, when referring and answering "How did you hear?" please quote "**Personal Plan**".

text 'FIRE' to 80800

call 0800 0731 999

visit firescotland.gov.uk

Prevent the person you care for becoming a victim of fire.

Does the person you care for smoke?

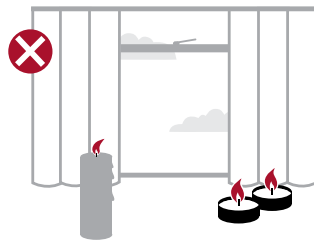
It is safer not to smoke but anyone who does should try to smoke outside. Smokers should always take care, especially if they're tired, or have been drinking alcohol. Make sure cigarettes are properly stubbed out in an ashtray. Always empty the ashtray, pour water over the cigarette ends and put them in the bin outside.

Avoid smoking in bed or anywhere else if there's a chance of falling asleep. If bedbound and still choosing to smoke, use fire-retardant bedding and nightwear and fit a smoke alarm in the bedroom. Ensure that the area around the person who smokes is free from clutter and flammable items, this will reduce the chance of fire spread should a cigarette fall from the smoker's hand. Ensure paraffin based emollient creams are replaced with non-flammable alternatives.



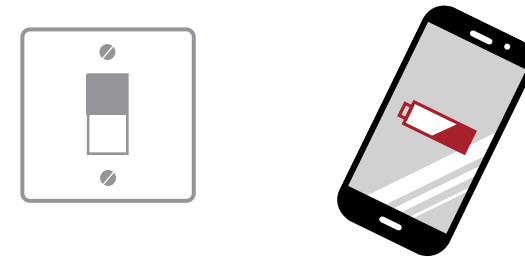
Candles and naked flames

Candles, tea lights and incense burners should only be placed in stable, heat-resistant holders, out of the reach of children and pets and where they can't be knocked over. Keep them well away from anything that could catch fire, like curtains, cards, cushions, TVs or even shelves. Never leave a lit candle alone, and if you're going out, or going to sleep, make sure candles are properly put out first.

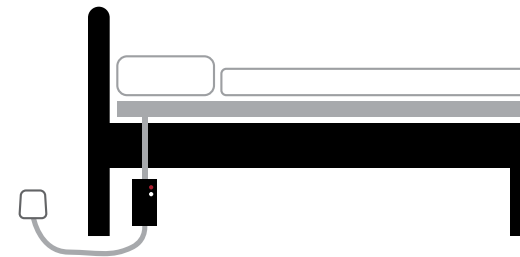


Electrical

Domestic appliances including televisions, computers, music systems, hair straighteners, dish washers, tumble driers, cooking appliances and washing machines are a common source of ignition. Switch off and unplug electrical items that don't need to be left on and avoid charging devices like mobile phones when sleeping. Never leave washing machines, tumble driers or dishwashers running while not in the property or during the night.



If using an electric blanket avoid getting it wet. If the blanket does become wet wait until it is completely dry before it is used again. Never use a hot water bottle and an electric blanket together. Use as per manufacturer's instruction and when not in use store flat, not rolled up.



Electrical

Use the right fuse. The fuse in a plug is a safety device that will 'blow' if an electrical appliance develops a fault. It cuts off the electricity to stop the appliance from overheating and causing a fire. If you fit the wrong fuse, it may not 'blow'. Check the manufacturer's instructions to make sure all your appliances are fitted with the correct fuse. As a general guide to fuses:

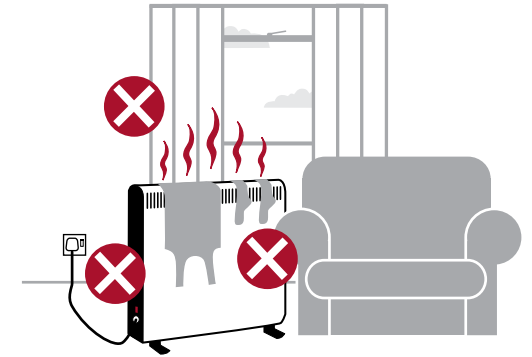
3 AMP FUSE

- lamps
- bed lights
- televisions
- radios
- hi-fi
- dvd players
- docking stations
- clocks
- computers games consoles
- electric blankets

13 AMP FUSE

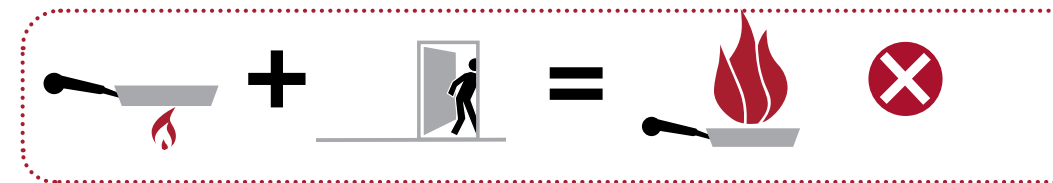
- refrigerators
- heaters
- kettles
- toasters
- washing machines
- dryers
- irons
- hair straighteners

Portable heaters and open fires. Never place yourself or any flammable item too close to a heat source. Sit at least one metre away from heaters or open fires. Always turn off before bed and follow the manufacturer's instructions when using a heater. If using an open fire ensure that fire guards are used at all times. Make sure a chimney is professionally swept and checked. You should have a carbon monoxide detector fitted in any room where there is a carbon-fuelled appliance (such as boilers, fires (including open fires), heaters and stoves) or a flue.



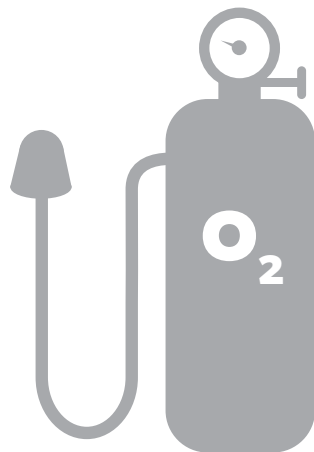
Cooking

The kitchen is where the majority of house fires start so never leave cooking unattended. If you need to leave the kitchen, turn electrical appliances off and take pans off the heat. Keep electrical appliances clean and in good working order and switch them off when not in use.



Oxygen therapy

Make sure your oxygen equipment is stored safely out of direct sunlight, well ventilated, always dry and away from heat sources. Do not smoke or allow others to smoke in your home or near your equipment, this includes e-cigarettes. Do not put oxygen therapy equipment near matches, candles, gas appliances or open fires. For further information, contact your oxygen supplier. Keep everyone safe and inform the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service of oxygen use.



Emollient Creams / Products

Emollient products (such as skin creams) have been a contributory factor in over 50 fire deaths and serious injuries across the UK during the last ten year period.

Emollient products are moisturiser's that can be used to prevent or treat dry skin conditions such as eczema, bed sores, ulcers and psoriasis. They come in many forms, including creams, lotions, gels or shampoos. All cover the skin with a protective film to reduce water loss.

Emollient products in isolation are not dangerously combustible; however, when an emollient product becomes impregnated into a fabric, the fabric chemical properties change - it will ignite more easily, burn more quickly and result in a more intense, rapidly developing fire situation.

All emollient products that are impregnated into fabric present an increased fire risk, including products that:

- Contain paraffin;
- Do not contain paraffin, such as those made with natural oils;
- Contain other flammable constituents.

Some, but not all, are clearly labelled with a fire risk warning.

They can make bedding, clothing and medical dressings very flammable, so are a serious fire safety concern, especially when used by people who spend extended periods in a bed or armchair due to illness or impaired mobility.



TOP SAFETY TIPS

Do not smoke, cook or go near to any naked flames or heat sources such as gas, halogen, electric bar or open fires whilst wearing clothing or dressings that have been in contact with emollient-treated skin. If this is not possible, take steps to reduce the risk; e.g., use a safety lighter or e-cigarette, remove long sleeved or loose clothing before cooking, put a thick uncontaminated shirt, overall or apron over your clothes and move your chair further away from the open fire or other heat source.

Change and wash your clothes frequently (preferably daily). Washing your clothes at the highest temperature recommended by the manufacturer might reduce the build-up of emollient on them but does not remove it completely and the danger may remain.

Take care the cream doesn't dry onto cushions, soft furnishings and bedding. If it does, use uncontaminated throws/covers on your seating and wash your bedding frequently as above.

Avoid folding laundry whilst it is still hot if it has been in the tumble dryer. Allow it to air cool first before folding.

Tell your relatives or carers about your treatment and show them this webpage or the downloadable leaflet featured below. Those who care for you can help to keep you safe.

Tell your doctor, nurse or pharmacist if you normally smoke. They will be able to offer you help and advice to stop smoking.

If you use an emollient product, or if you are a relative or carer for someone who does, please take a moment to download this fire safety leaflet:

https://www.firescotland.gov.uk/media/2259780/emollients_a5_leaflet_290720.pdf

Further information:

- National Eczema Society Advice – <https://eczema.org/blog/emollients-and-fire-risk/>
- GOV.UK Emollient Advice – <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safe-use-of-emollient-skin-creams-to-treat-dry-skin-conditions>

Air Pressure Relieving Mattresses



These items are used for the prevention and treatment of pressure sores and ulcers that can be caused by extended periods of immobility. The mattress is filled with air by a pump which adjusts pressure according to the patient's needs.

If anyone in your home uses an air pressure relieving mattresses or overlay make sure you follow these safety tips:

SAFETY TIPS

- Keep ignition sources such as candles, incense sticks or oil burners away from air pressure relieving mattresses. If punctured by a heat source the escaping airflow could cause a fire which would spread rapidly. The emergency battery backup may continue to pump air which can cause a fire to burn longer.
- Keep fires and heaters away from air pressure mattresses.
- Never use an electric blanket on an air pressure mattress.
- Never place hot items like hairdryers or hair straighteners on airflow mattresses.
- Ensure that electrical equipment is well maintained and kept a safe distance from airflow mattresses.
- Never smoke in bed or near an air pressure mattress.

Early warning and detection of a fire is essential

In February 2019, the legislation relating to smoke detection in the home changed. This means all domestic properties in Scotland, regardless of tenure, should have the same levels of detection; increasing fire safety.

The regulations come into force in February 2022, meaning homeowners and landlords have until then to comply. However, installing alarms at the earliest opportunity, will provide improved fire safety in your home. Any costs will be the responsibility of home owners. If you do not own the property, then your landlord will be responsible for installing and paying for the alarms.

Your home should have:

- One smoke alarm installed in the room most frequently used for general daytime living purposes
- One smoke alarm in every circulation space on each storey, such as hallways and landings
- One heat alarm installed in every kitchen

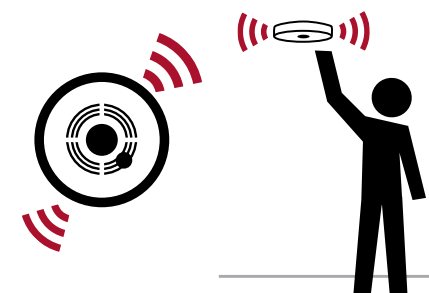
If your home is on one level – a flat or bungalow – you need to fit at least two smoke alarms. If your home has more than one level, you'll need one on each floor, plus the living room. All alarms should be ceiling mounted and interlinked.

Consider fitting additional smoke alarms in bedrooms, particularly where persons are bedridden or otherwise vulnerable from fire due to ill health or disability. Smoke alarms should also be fitted anywhere electrical equipment has to be switched on.

The best place for a smoke or heat alarm is on the ceiling. Try and keep them 30cm (12 inches) away from any walls, lights, doors, heating or air-conditioning vents.

Further information on the requirements of the new standard, and how to meet it, is available from the Scottish Government: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/fire-and-smoke-alarms-in-scottish-homes/>

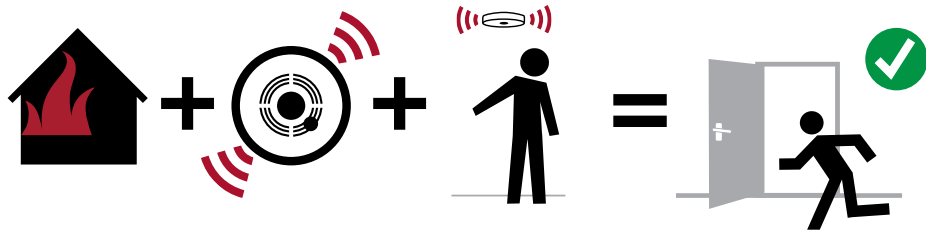
Fitting multiple linked smoke alarms, that all activate together, is the best way to be alerted in the event of a fire. There are special alarms for older people, people with disabilities or other special needs. Things like mains-powered smoke alarms with back-up batteries, and even vibrating pads and flashing lights that warn people who can't hear well.



If you think someone would need help to escape a fire it's important they have a way of calling for help. This could be a Telecare monitoring phone system that's been set up with a one-touch or automatically dialed emergency number, or it could be a private or local authority assistance alert scheme.

Escape plan

Make sure escape routes are kept clear of anything that may slow down or block exit routes. Close all doors at night as this helps to prevent fire and smoke spreading. Ensure security gates can be easily opened from the inside without the need for a key. Keep door and window keys where everyone can find them. Mobility aids and any methods of calling for help should always be kept close to hand (e.g. mobile phone, link alarm/pendant).



Cut me out and stick me on the fridge

Carer's bedtime checklist



Name of cared for person.....

- Switch off all electrical appliances not designed to be left on overnight
- Check the cooker is turned off at the main socket
- Turn off any dishwasher, washing machine and tumble dryer
- Do not leave chargeable items charging overnight
- Turn off portable heaters and put a fire-guard around the fire place
- Put any candles and cigarettes out properly
- Make sure the main door keys are to hand
- Ensure mobility aids and any methods of calling for help are accessible for the cared for person
- Make sure all exits are kept clear
- Close all the inside doors at night to stop fire from spreading
- Once a week check all smoke detection



Visit firescotland.gov.uk for practical fire safety advice. Or talk to your local firefighters. You'll find contact details on the website, in your local library and in the phone book.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format or a version in another language, please contact 0800 0731 999.

TO BOOK A FREE HOME FIRE SAFETY VISIT

Call 0800 0731 999

Text 'FIRE' to 80800

or visit firescotland.gov.uk



SCOTTISH

FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Working together for a safer Scotland