
Winter Fire Safety



STAY SAFE FROM FIRE THIS WINTER

Stay Safe from Fire this Winter

By following the simple advice contained in this leaflet you can help to reduce the risk of having a fire in your home this winter. Spare a thought for elderly relatives, friends and neighbours too. Are they as safe from fire as they could be?

Candle Safety

- ✓ Never leave a candle unattended and remember to extinguish it before you go to sleep.
- ✓ Make sure the candle is standing up straight and is fixed firmly in a proper holder so that it can't fall over. Scented candles turn to liquid in order to release their fragrance, so always burn them in a suitable glass or metal container that can withstand the heat of the liquid and that the liquid cannot lead from.
- ✓ Always place candles on a heat-resistant surface. Night lights and tea lights can melt plastic surfaces, such as the top of a TV and the side of a bath tub.
- ✓ Keep candles out of draughts, blowing curtains and sources of heat or direct sunlight.
- ✓ Always leave at least 10cm (4 inches) between two candles and never place them under shelves or other surfaces.
- ✓ Extinguish the candle before it burns into the holder.
- ✓ Burn all candles well out of the reach of children and pets.
- ✓ Always put candles out before you move them. Using a 'snuffer' or a spoon is safer than blowing them out, which can send sparks and hot wax flying.
- ✓ Consider an extra smoke alarm in the rooms that candles are burnt in.
- ✗ Outdoor candles should never be used indoors.
- ✗ Don't lean across a candle – you could set your hair or clothes on fire.
- ✗ Don't play with candles for example, by putting matchsticks or anything else into the hot wax.



Heaters

- ✓ Always position heaters so the back is against a wall and they're facing the room. If possible, secure them to the wall to prevent them from falling over.
- ✓ Switch heaters off if you're not in the room and also when you go to bed.
- ✓ Portable gas heaters should have the cylinders stored and changed outside or in a well ventilated atmosphere.
- ✓ Both gas and paraffin heaters should only be used in a well ventilated area. They consume oxygen from the atmosphere and can cause death by asphyxiation (suffocation), if not adequately ventilated.
- ✗ Don't place heaters near curtains or furnishings and never use them for drying clothes.



Cooking Safety

In the event of a power cut or failure of your fuel supply, make sure any alternative cooking equipment to be used is working properly and safely before use.

- ✓ Clothing and tea towels should be kept away from the cooker.
- ✓ Keep electrical leads away from the cooker and from water.
- ✓ If deep fat frying, never fill the pan more than one third full. You are heating oil to extremely high temperatures – ideal conditions for a fire.
- ✓ If a pan catches fire, don't take risks – get everyone out of your home and call the Fire and Rescue Service.
- ✓ Turn off the heat under the pan if it's safe to do so and allow it to cool completely
- ✗ Don't leave pans on the hob when you're not around. Take them off the heat if you have to leave the kitchen.
- ✗ Don't move the pan and never throw water over it.



Chimneys

- ✓ Sweep the chimney before use if you haven't used it for sometime.
- ✓ Sweep at least once a year if you burn coal or at least twice a year if you burn logs.
- ✓ Always keep a fire guard in front of a burning fire.
- ✓ Extinguish the fire before going to bed or leaving the house.
- ✗ Never use petrol or paraffin to light your fire.



Electric Blankets

If a blanket has scorch marks or exposed elements, it should not be used. Over blankets are designed to be left switched on, whilst under blankets must be switched off before getting into bed.

- ✓ If your blanket is more than 10 years old or if it shows signs of wear and tear, the best advice is to get a new one.
- ✓ When buying a new electric blanket, ensure it has 'overheat protection', which will cut off the electricity if it becomes too hot.
- ✓ Electric blankets should carry the British Standard Kitemark and the British Electrotechnical Approvals Board (BEAB) symbol on them.
- ✓ Have your blanket checked by an expert once every three years or as recommended by the manufacturer.
- ✗ Don't fold electric blankets. Protect the wiring inside them by storing them flat or rolled up.
- ✗ Don't leave an electric blanket switched on all night, unless it is thermostatically controlled so it can be used all night.
- ✗ Never use hot water bottles in the same bed as an electric blanket, even if the blanket is switched off.



Matches & Lighters

- ✓ Extinguish all matches properly.
- ✓ Keep all matches and lighters out of sight and reach of children.
- ✓ Refill your lighter away from naked flames and in a well ventilated area.
- ✗ In the event of a power cut, don't use matches or lighters as an alternative light or heat source.



Lighting

In the event of a power failure, use battery operated lights or torches as an alternative light source. If you must use candles, make sure you follow the safety guidelines listed inside this leaflet.

- ✓ If you use a gas or paraffin lamp make sure it is working properly and used in a well ventilated area.
- ✓ If you want to subdue the lighting, a low wattage bulb should be used.
- ✗ Never position lights or bulbs near curtains and other fabrics.
- ✗ Never cover your lights with fabric.



Fire Safety for Thatched Buildings

A thatched roof is always at risk from fire. Once a fire has taken hold in a thatch it will spread rapidly. The commonest causes of fire in a thatched building are electrical faults, lightning affecting the television aerial, stray sparks from the chimneys, discarded cigarettes and garden bonfires.

- ✓ Television aerials should be fitted to a freestanding pole. Where this is not possible it may be fixed to a gable or gable end chimney where the cable can be run down the wall, avoiding contact with the thatch.
- ✓ Disconnect the TV aerial during electrical storms to prevent damage to the system. Lightning conductors should conform to British Standard BS6651 1999.
- ✓ Protect your household by fitting and maintaining smoke alarms



Make sure that in the event of a power cut you can still make an emergency telephone call should you need to. Some telephones will not work if the power has gone off. Make alternative back up arrangements, for example, a mobile phone.

Published by the Department for Communities and Local Government

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Printed in the UK, May 2006

On material containing 75% post-consumer waste and 25% ECF pulp

Product Code: FS055

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