



NFCC
National Fire
Chiefs Council

COST OF LIVING

Steps to stay fire safe
Northern Ireland



**Northern Ireland
Fire & Rescue Service**

Protect your home with **smoke and carbon monoxide (CO) alarms**

You are more likely to die in a fire in the home if you do not have any working smoke alarms. 14% of house fires in Northern Ireland over the last 5 years didn't have working smoke alarms. Test your smoke alarms to make sure they are working, they give you a vital early warning and enable you to escape. A fire can destroy sentimental and material possessions and have a devastating impact on people.

CO alarms can protect against this poisonous, colourless and odourless gas, produced by appliances which burn gas, wood, oil or coal. CO can make you seriously ill and can be fatal.

Smoke alarms

- Standard battery operated smoke alarms are cheapest. The batteries need to be replaced every year.
- Ten-year sealed battery smoke alarms cost slightly more but you save the cost of replacing batteries every year.
- Make sure the alarms can be heard from areas where people may fall asleep.
- Don't install smoke alarms in or near kitchens or bathrooms where smoke or steam may set them off accidentally.
- Heat alarms can be installed in kitchens.



Install at least one smoke alarm on every level of your home.



Test them weekly.

If you don't have any working smoke alarms, we may be able to provide them as part of our free Home Fire Safety Check Scheme. The last page of this leaflet lists our eligibility criteria and information on how to apply.

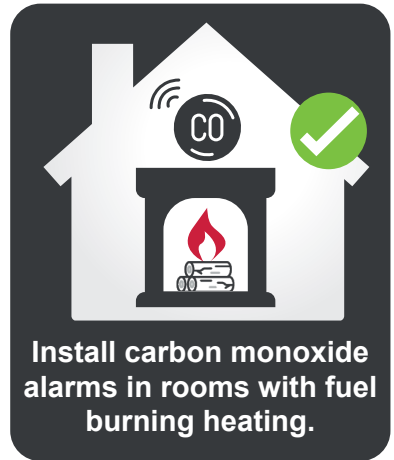
If you rent, speak to your landlord about providing them.

TOP TIP: Plan an escape route and make sure everyone knows what to do if your smoke alarm goes off.



CO alarms

- Install in all rooms with fuel burning heating which does not run off electricity.
- Book a gas safety check now to prevent CO poisoning, gas leaks and explosions in your home. Homeowners, check with your energy provider to see if you are eligible for a free annual check through their Priority Services Register.
- If you are a tenant, your landlord must arrange an annual gas safety check by a Gas Safe registered engineer for gas supply, pipes and any appliances that are provided as part of your tenancy.



In the future the Private Tenancies Act will require landlords to equip their properties with smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms.

Cigarettes

Smoking is the number one cause of accidental fire deaths in the UK. Reduce the risk by attempting to quit, using NHS support if you need it.

- Never smoke in bed or in a chair where you might fall asleep.
- Stub cigarettes out properly and dispose of them carefully. **Put them out. Right out.**
- Smoke outdoors and put cigarettes right out – this is safer than smoking indoors.
- Never discard cigarettes or smoking materials on or over balconies.
- Counterfeit and illegal cigarettes can increase fire risk. If you are not ready to quit, only buy legal cigarettes.



Heating your home

You may have had to change the way you heat your home. Follow our advice on using heating appliances to help stay fire safe.

Using portable heaters

Always read the instructions and understand how to use appliances safely, checking they're in good working order.

- Check portable heaters are not subject to a safety notice or product recall
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/product-recalls-and-alerts>



Don't sit too close to a heater. Always sit at least one metre from a heater as it could set light to your clothes or chair.

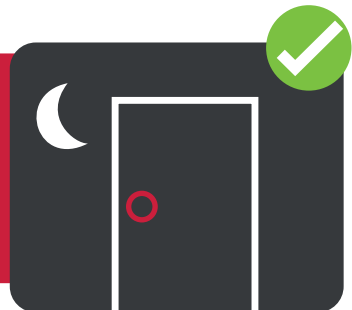


Plug electric heaters into a wall socket - not an extension lead.

- Don't place portable heaters where they will block your escape route or where they might be knocked over.
- Keep heaters away from flammable materials such as paper, curtains, furniture and bedding.
- Unplug heaters when you go out or go to bed.
- Only use gas or paraffin heaters in well-ventilated areas, having checked that they are suitable for indoor use. Make sure a CO alarm is installed in the same room.

TOP TIP:

Close internal doors at night. It will help keep your rooms warm and reduce fire and smoke spread if a fire starts.



Using open fires and woodburning stoves

Open fires and woodburning stoves can be a cost effective way of heating your home. Follow our advice to reduce the risk of a fire or CO incident in your home.

- Always use a fire guard with an open fire to protect against flying sparks from hot embers.
- Make sure embers are under control and properly put out before you go to bed.
- If you are re-opening an old fireplace you will need to consider building regulations. Get flues and chimneys checked and swept to prevent chimney fires and CO poisoning.
- Use the correct fuel for your fire. Burning household waste or material such as treated wood can cause toxic fumes in the home and is a fire risk.
- Store fuels for open fires and woodburning stoves away from the appliance so they don't catch fire.
- Fit a CO alarm in all rooms with fuel burning appliances.



Never dry clothes directly on or in close proximity to a heater or open fire.

Electrics

Keeping electrical appliances clean and maintained is not only safer but can keep them energy efficient and prolong their lifespan.

- Don't run appliances at night when the household is asleep - you will have less time to react if a fire starts. Check your tariff - most homes don't get cheaper electricity at night.
- Register your electrical products – you will be informed if there is a problem – www.registermyappliance.org.uk. This doesn't just apply to new items you can register older or second-hand appliances too.



Always check for safety markings on electrical items.



- Don't overload plug sockets. Appliances such as washing machines and electric heaters should be plugged directly into a wall socket as they are high powered.
- If you think there might be a problem with an appliance don't risk it. Unplug it and contact the retailer, manufacturer or qualified repair technician.
- Always buy electrical products from reputable retailers and manufacturers - fake, counterfeit and substandard products are a fire risk. Electrical appliances should always have a British or European safety mark.
- When charging electrical goods, follow the manufacturer's instructions and look for the CE mark that indicates chargers comply with European safety standards.

Electric blankets

- Store electric blankets flat, rolled up or loosely folded to prevent damaging the internal wiring.
- Unplug blankets before you get into bed unless it has a thermostat control for safe all-night use.
- Do not buy second hand blankets - they may not meet current safety standards.
- Check regularly for wear and tear and don't use if wires are visible or poking through the fabric.
- Don't use a blanket that has scorch marks or discolouration or if the control makes a buzzing sound when switched on.
- Always follow the manufacturer's instructions and use it as intended.
- Liquids and electric blankets don't mix. Do not use a hot water bottle or bring drinks nearby while you are using your blanket.



Candles

Candles aren't an efficient way of heating a room and be very careful if using them for lighting. Around 30% of fires throughout the UK started by candles and attended by fire and rescue services result in death or injury.

- Always make sure candles are in a suitable holder and away anything flammable.
- Do not burn several candles close together, this might cause the flame to flare.
- Don't use candles in bedrooms or anywhere where you might fall asleep.
- Put out candles when you leave the room, and make sure they're out completely at night.
- Children and pets shouldn't be left alone with lit candles.
- Keep matches and lighters out of children's reach.
- Using LED candles, torches or battery lights are a brighter and safer alternative





Home Fire Safety Check

You may be entitled to a **free** Home Fire Safety Check if you or anyone living in your household:-

- Are aged 50 or older;
- Have a disability or impaired mobility (including those with an impairment or health condition that would impact on their ability to acknowledge or respond to an emergency in the home) or;
- Receive assistance from a visiting Agency on a regular basis to help with day-to-day tasks.

To request this please visit www.nifrs.org or telephone 028 9266 4221.

Remember, in the event of a fire...
**GET OUT, STAY OUT
AND CALL 999**



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