

**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](https://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.



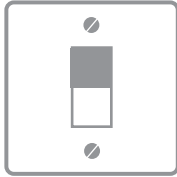
# Candles and naked flames

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.

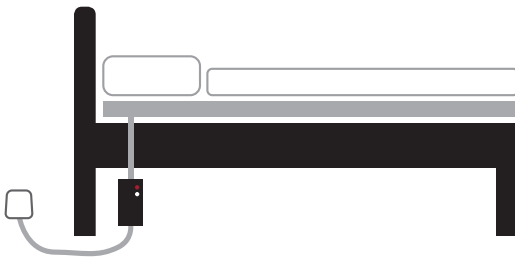


# Electrical

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

# Heating

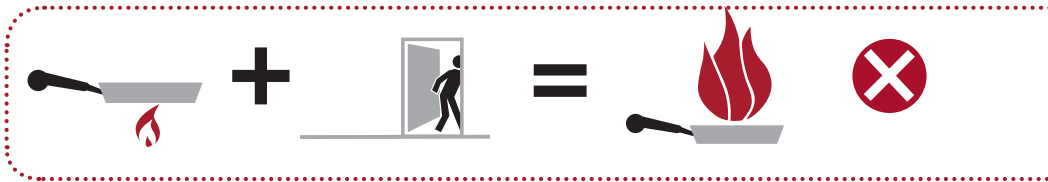
Portable heaters and open fires. Never place yourself or any flammable item too close to a heat source. Sit at least one metre away from heaters or open fires. Always turn off before bed and follow the manufacturer's instructions when using a heater. If using an

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.



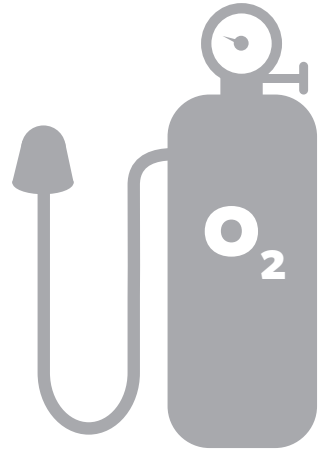
# Cooking

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.



## 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 2021, 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:

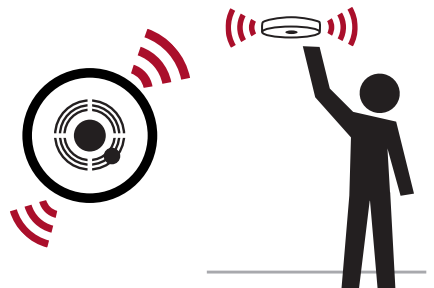
- One smoke alarm installed in the room most frequently used for general daytime living purposes
- One smoke alarm in every circulation space on each storey, such as hallways and landings
- One heat alarm installed in every kitchen

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 [www.gov.scot/publications/fire-and-smoke-alarms-in-scottish-homes/](http://www.gov.scot/publications/fire-and-smoke-alarms-in-scottish-homes/)

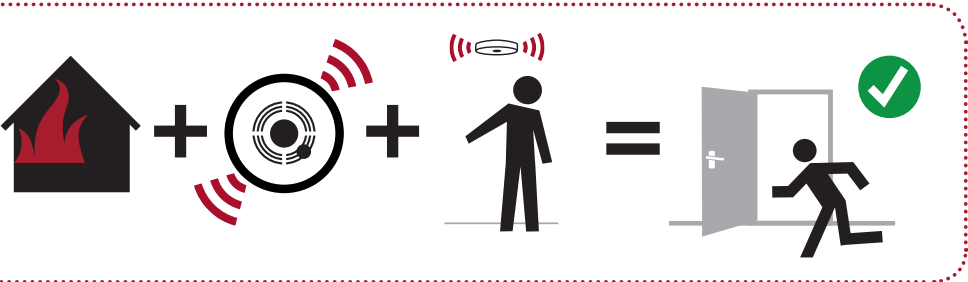


Fitting multiple linked smoke alarms, that all activate together, is the best way to be alerted in the event of a fire. There are special alarms for older people, people with disabilities or other special needs. Things like mains-powered smoke alarms with back-up batteries, and even vibrating pads and 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).



# 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](https://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](https://firescotland.gov.uk)**



**SCOTTISH**

**FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

Working together for a safer Scotland