

A Safer Home



DORSET & WILTSHIRE
FIRE AND RESCUE



Jeśli potrzebujesz tych informacji w swoim języku, kliknij kod QR

Wenn Sie diese Informationen in Ihrer Sprache benötigen, klicken Sie auf den QR-Code

यदि तपाईंलाई तपाईंको भाषामा यो जानकारी चाहिन्छ भने, QR कोड क्लिक गर्नुहोस्

Kung kailangan mo ang impormasyong ito sa iyong wika, i-click ang QR code

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আপনার যদি আপনার ভাষায় এই তথ্যের প্রয়োজন হয়, তাহলে QR কোডে ক্লিক করুন

Se você precisar dessas informações em seu idioma, clique no código QR

إذا كنت بحاجة إلى هذه المعلومات بلغتك، فانقر فوق رمز الاستجابة السريعة

Introduction

Your Fire and Rescue Service is here to help you in emergency situations, such as fire, floods and road traffic collisions. We also want to help keep you safer in your home, and we hope this booklet will provide you with some useful hints and tips.

The information we give you is goodwill advice and support. We aim to help keep you safer and enable you to make decisions about your safety.

If your circumstances change, you may wish to discuss your fire safety concerns with us. Please call our Safe & Well team on freephone **0800 038 2323**. You may need to leave an answerphone message outside of office hours and during busy periods within the day. Please ensure that you leave your name, address and telephone number so we can contact you.

If your smoke detector is bleeping or chirping:

- Clean the detector as per our maintenance guide.
- Test the detector by pressing the 'test' button.
- If your detector continues to bleep or chirp, please call us on **0800 038 2323**.

If your detector is in full activation and you need assistance, please call **999**.

It is your landlord's responsibility to fit smoke and carbon monoxide detectors in your home when you first occupy the property. You should contact them if you need your detectors to be replaced.

Vulnerabilities and Risk

In this section, you will find some practical advice tailored to your needs and lifestyle.

Visual impairments or sight loss?

If you are blind or have reduced vision, there are additional ways to ensure that you would be aware of a fire in your home.

- Consider putting a coloured sticker in the centre of your smoke detector to help you see it for testing or ask for support from a family member, friend or neighbour – please call our Safe & Well team to request additional resources.
- Place Tacti-marks and bump-on stickers onto switches, cooker hobs and electrical items as a way of making sure they are switched off properly.
- Unplug and check electrical leads regularly by touch, to identify if they are frayed or faulty. Electrical items can give off a burning smell if they are faulty, so if this happens, turn off the appliance and unplug it immediately.


- Place helpful indicators along your escape route and make sure you feel comfortable following them, even if you're feeling tired in the middle of the night.
- Make sure all doorways, landings, hallways and stairs are clear of items which could cause a slip, trip or fall.
- Keep door and window keys near the exit.
- Have a 'plan B'. The front door is usually your first option to exit the property but have a 'plan B' if your main exit route is blocked.


More information about helpful indicators can be found on the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) online shop:

 www.shop.rnib.org.uk/home

For more information, contact the RNIB on:

 shop@rnib.org.uk

 0303 123 9999

 0808 808 9000

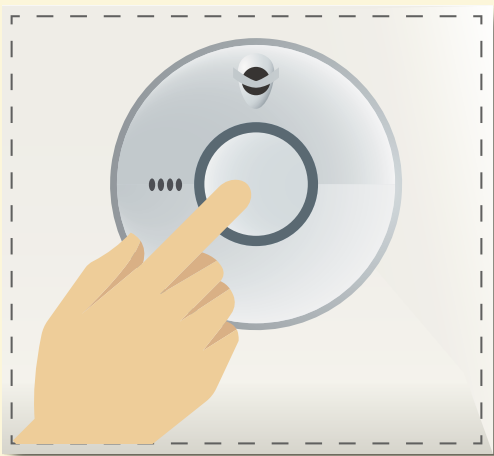


Hearing impairments or hearing loss?

If you are deaf or hard of hearing, you may benefit from having specialist detector equipment installed, which includes Wi-Fi smoke detectors, a strobe light and a vibrating pad to help wake you should a fire happen.

These detector systems work in the same way as other smoke detectors and can be fitted by our Safe & Well team.


We can arrange to install the system, explain how it works, and help you to obtain further advice and support in relation to other additional devices.




You can also:

- Register for the SMS 999 service, which will link you automatically to the emergency services – just text ‘register’ to 999, you will get a reply with instructions to follow.
- Make sure your front doorbell is working and is an amplified, flashing or a vibrating device so that a neighbour or firefighter can alert you.
- Place helpful indicators along your escape route and make sure you feel comfortable following them, even if you’re feeling tired in the middle of the night.
- If you use a pager (which is linked to your detector system), remember to keep it charged and keep it with you.
- If you are worried that your equipment is not working properly, contact our Safe & Well team for advice and support.

Further details can also be obtained from Action on Hearing Loss.

 www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk

 0808 808 0123

Text: 0808 808 9000






Mobility aided

If you, a family member or someone you care for has mobility difficulties, here is some practical advice which may help.

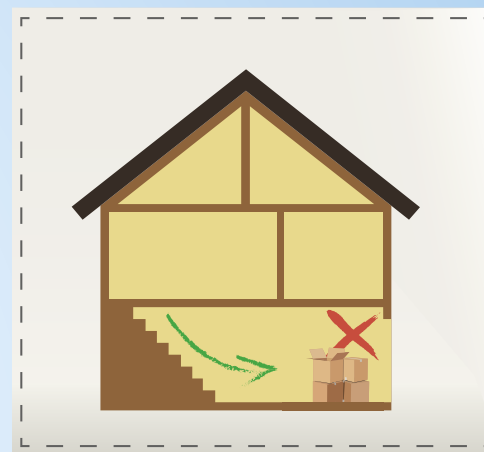
- If it is difficult to test your smoke detectors, ask somebody to do it for you. You can also get easy access detectors, which can be tested from the wall rather than the ceiling.
- If you have trouble moving around, consider fitting an intercom that will allow you to alert someone else in the house in the event of an emergency.
- Always keep a phone next to your bed in case you need to make an emergency call.
- Make sure you have easy access at all times to any mobility aids you may need to assist your escape, such as a walking stick.

- Make sure any stairlifts or wheelchairs are kept in good working order.
- Consider alternative means of escape should the electricity supply fail due to a fire and you are therefore unable to use a lift or stair lift.
- Keep doorways, corridors and escape routes clear.
- If you use a mobility scooter, make sure it is well maintained and take care when charging it. Give consideration to where it is stored, parked or charged to avoid it obstructing your exit.
- Do not charge mobility scooters overnight.

Easy access detectors can be provided by the Disabled Living Foundation (DLF), a non-profit national charity providing impartial advice, information and training on equipment for independent living. For more information, visit www.dlf.org.uk or contact them on:

 020 7289 6111

 info@dlf.org.uk



Detection

Smoke detectors

A smoke detector provides early warning of a fire, gives you time to escape, and really does save lives.

- Fit a smoke detector on every level of your home, ideally on the ceiling of a hallway or landing.
- In 75% of house fires where a smoke detector had been fitted, less than half worked properly because of missing batteries or defects.
- The detectors supplied by your Fire and Rescue Service are sealed units with a 10 year battery life.
- Never disconnect detectors or take out the batteries if a detector goes off by mistake.
- Test detectors every week.
- Replace detectors at least every 10 years.
- If the alarm goes off, get out, stay out, and call 999.

Hard wired/mains powered smoke detectors

These detectors are connected to the mains electrical supply and most have a battery back-up in case of power interruptions. The detectors are inter-linked between floors and they are the most reliable method of giving you an early warning in the event of a fire.



- Test detectors every week.
- Change the back-up battery every year.
- If it becomes faulty, contact a qualified electrician or smoke detector engineer as soon as possible to carry out essential maintenance to the system you have in place.

**Press me
to test me!**



Carbon monoxide detectors

Carbon monoxide is a poisonous gas produced by the incomplete burning of solid fuels (including gas, oil, wood, petrol and coal). You can't smell it, see it or taste it.

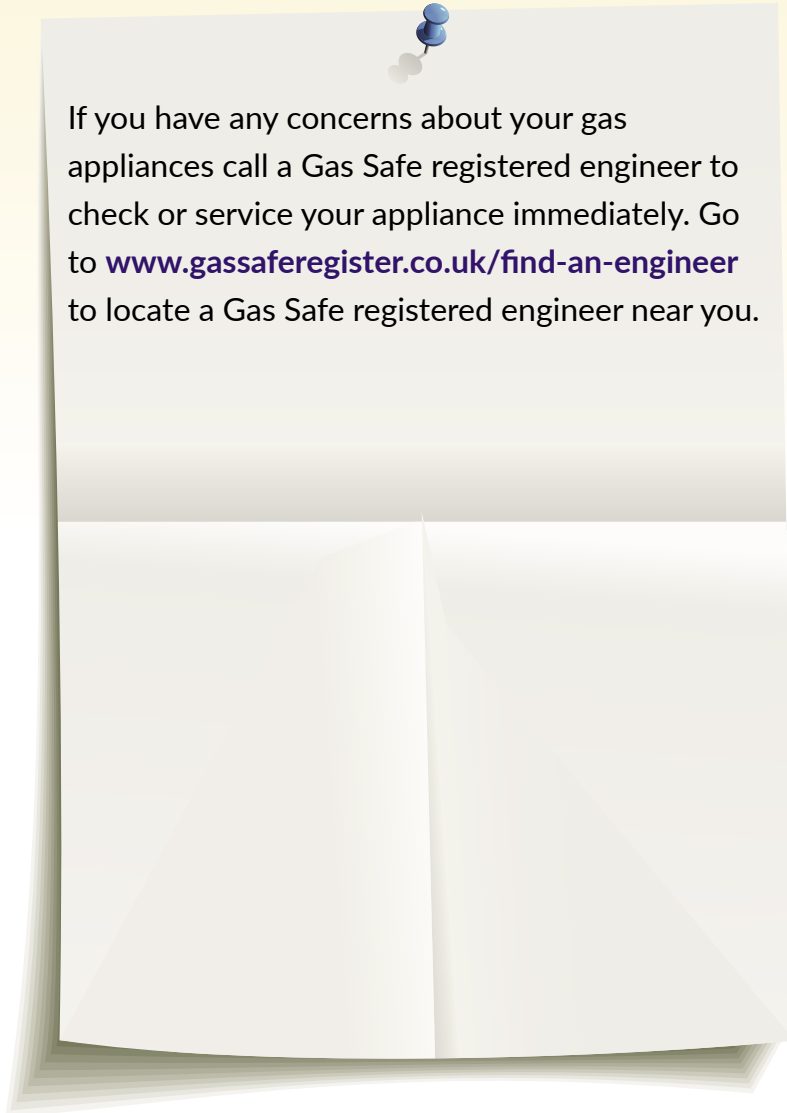
A headache is the most common symptom of carbon monoxide poisoning. Other common symptoms include nausea (feeling sick), dizziness, feeling out of breath, collapse and loss of consciousness.

Symptoms are similar to flu, food poisoning, viral infections and tiredness. If you experience any of these symptoms or your carbon monoxide detector goes off, get fresh air immediately and seek medical advice.

- Fit a carbon monoxide detector in your home. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for its positioning and fitting.
- The detectors supplied by your Fire and Rescue Service are sealed units with a seven or ten year battery life.



- To report a gas or carbon monoxide emergency, or if a pipeline is struck (even if no gas leak has occurred), call **0800 111 999** – 24 hours a day.
- Lastly, check your flue outlets are not obstructed as this can stop fumes escaping. Never try to block draughts, and check your chimney for blockages (like birds' nests) every year.

A white rectangular note pinned to the background with a blue pushpin at the top left corner. The note contains text about contacting a Gas Safe registered engineer.

If you have any concerns about your gas appliances call a Gas Safe registered engineer to check or service your appliance immediately. Go to www.gassaferegister.co.uk/find-an-engineer to locate a Gas Safe registered engineer near you.

Heat detectors

Heat detectors are generally fitted on kitchen ceilings, and detect high or rapid rises in temperature. They will give you warning of a potential fire in your kitchen, but will not be set off by cooking fumes.

- Consider whether your kitchen is suitable for a heat detector to be fitted – follow the manufacturer’s guidance regarding positioning.
- Never disconnect detectors or take out the batteries if a detector is set off by mistake.
- Test detectors weekly.
- If the detector goes off, get out, stay out, call 999.
- Replace detectors at least every 10 years.
- The detectors supplied by your fire and rescue service are sealed units with a 10 year battery life.

Maintenance and cleaning

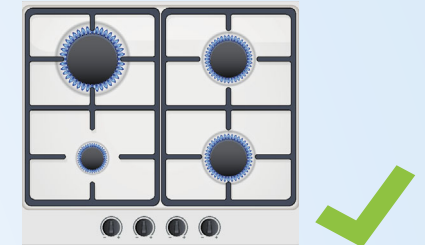
- Vacuum around your smoke and heat detectors at least every six months.
- Wipe the detector with a damp clean cloth every six months.
- Detectors should be replaced at least every 10 years.
- Do not spray detectors with cleaner or polish.



General Home Safety

Kitchen safety

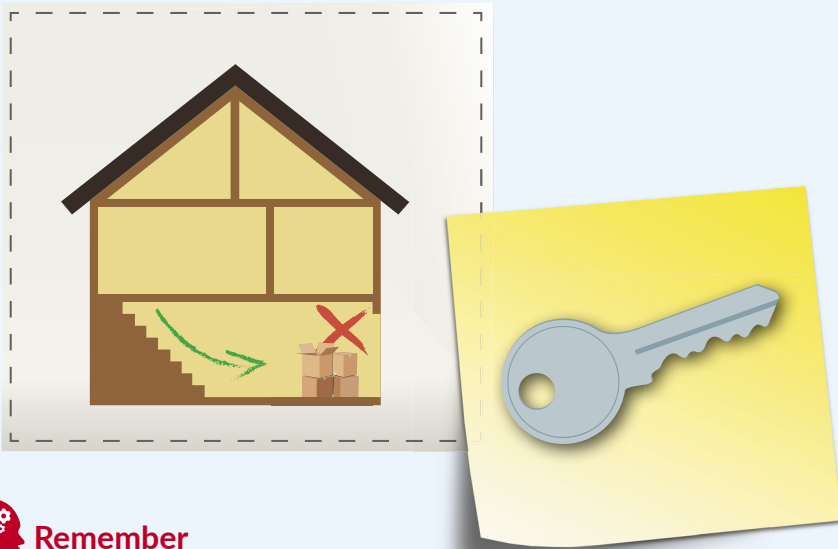
- Switch off the oven and hob when you have finished cooking.
- Keep electrical leads, tea towels and cloths away from the oven and hob.
- Spark devices are safer than matches or lighters to light gas cookers.





Escape plan

- Make sure you are prepared by knowing your escape plan
- Make sure everyone knows the plan.
- Make sure your exits are kept clear.
- The best route is your normal way out, but identify a second option.
- Think about any difficulties that you may have getting out and think of solutions.



Remember

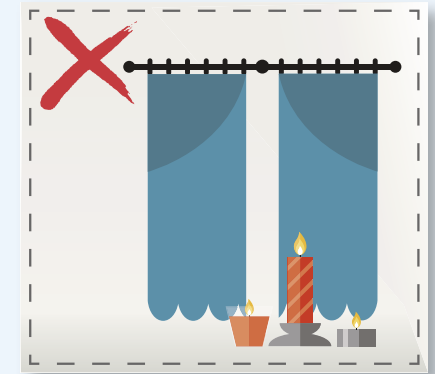
- Make sure everyone in the property knows where the door and window keys are kept ensuring these are close to the relevant door or window.
- Make sure you practice the plan, it will only work if everyone knows what to do.



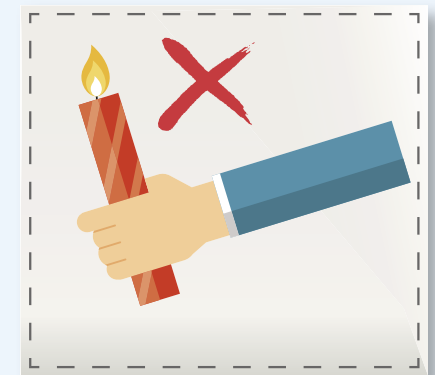
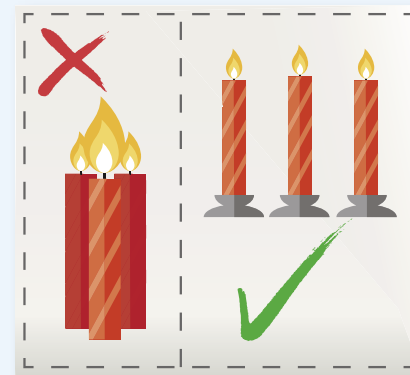
Candle safety

There are over 50 fires started by candles every day. Follow our advice to ensure your home is safe.

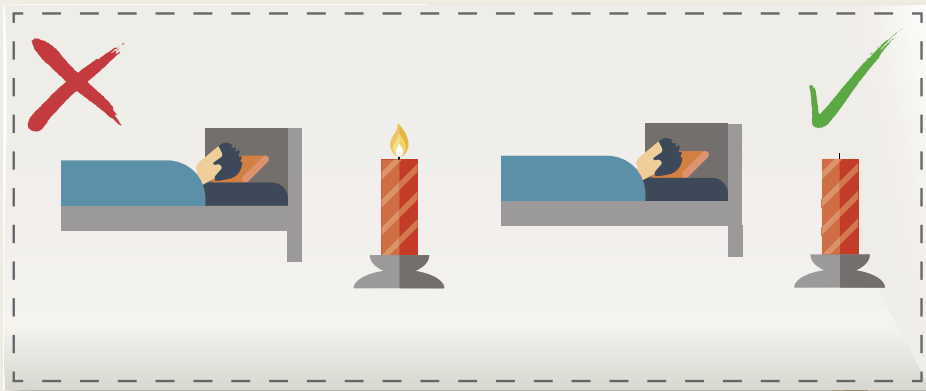
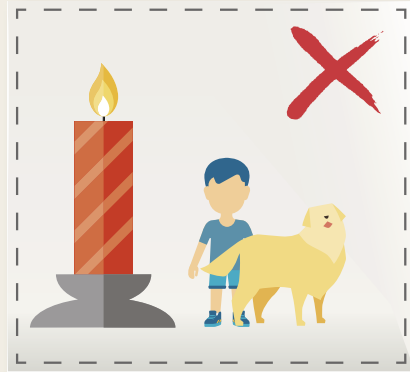
Make sure candles are secured in a candle holder and away from anything that could catch fire, like curtains or ornaments.



Don't burn lots of candles close together, as this may cause a larger flame, and do not move them once lit.



Put out candles, incense or oil burners when you leave the room.
Never leave children or pets alone with burning candles and
make sure all candles are out before going to bed.



Electrical safety

- Turn off electrical appliances when not in use and when you go to bed.
- Don't overload sockets, keep to one plug per socket.
- Check old cables and leads and never place cables under carpets.

For more advice visit: www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk.



Check electrical appliances for signs of:



Flickering lights



Scorch marks



Hot plugs and sockets



Loose wires

- Only one plug in each socket for each high powered appliance.



Electric blankets

- Unplug at night, unless your blanket is designed to be left on.
- Never buy second hand.
- Store it flat or rolled up loosely, never fold.
- Test regularly.
- Turn off and consult a qualified electrician if you have any concerns.



Electric blankets deteriorate over time, so we recommend replacing them every 10 years



White goods

White goods (such as tumble dryers, washing machines etc) should always be plugged directly into the mains power socket. Sometimes this may not be possible, so ensure these larger goods only have one plug per socket.



Please remember though:

- Never leave these running overnight.
- Clean your filter in the tumble dryer after every use.
- Never cover the vent or any other openings.

There is a website for you to register your appliance, so you will receive safety alerts and notification of product recalls. See www.registermyappliance.org.uk to sign up to the scheme.

Clutter and Hoarding

If you store large amounts of possessions in your home, you can help protect yourself and others by following this advice.

- Keep all exits and escape routes clear from clutter – implement a RED ROUTE system. This should be an area free of clutter, such as in doorways and stairways.
- Make sure all internal doors can be fully closed at night.
- Do not put boxes or bags in front of, or around sockets where items are plugged in, and make sure there is ventilation.
- Do not create a chain of extension leads by plugging them into each other around the room, this is called “daisy chaining” and can cause an electrical fire.
- Ensure any heaters or potential ignition sources are stored on stable surfaces.
- Do not stack items to a height that they become unstable – they can fall and block your escape.



Firefighters cannot move swiftly through a home filled with clutter, and can be trapped in a home when exits are blocked. They can be injured by objects falling from piles as well as the weight of the stored items. When water is used to put out a fire, it can lead to building collapse; fighting fires is very risky in a hoarded home. The clutter will also impede the search and rescue of people.

Newspapers and mail are highly combustible, so sort through your mail and recycle on a regular basis. You can stop receiving junk mail by completing an opt out form available from Royal Mail: www.royalmail.com/sites/default/files/D2D-Opt-Out-Application-Form-2015.pdf.

If you have a fire in your home, get out, stay out and call 999. Do not stop on your way out to collect items and DO NOT go back inside once you have left your property.



Further support can be found on these useful websites:
www.hoarding.support/top-tips
www.hoardingdisordersuk.org
www.mind.org.uk

Unsafe Heating



- Always turn off before bed.
- Don't place too close to bedding, curtains, clothing or anything which could catch fire.
- Always follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- If you have any concerns turn the heater off and consult a qualified electrician.



Always turn off before bed

Don't place too close to bedding, curtains and clothing – anything which could catch fire

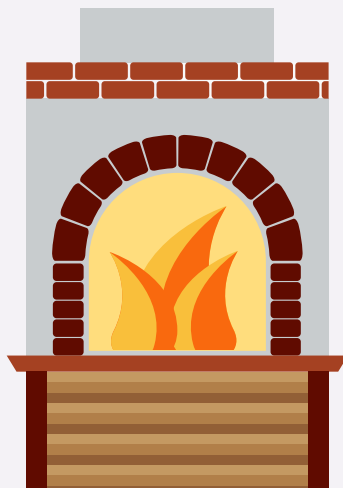


Wood burners and open fires

- Ensure your burner is properly installed, maintained and regularly serviced by a qualified person.
- Wood burning stoves should be placed on a fire-resistant base and not directly onto a hardwood floor or carpeted surface.
- Ensure you use the right type of wood or coal.
- The chimney or flue should be cleaned at the end of each heating season (typically October - February) and at least once during the heating season.
- Use a protective fire guard.
- Remove ash and burnt fuel once it has cooled.

Do you live in a thatched house?

Visit our website for further information on thatched properties at dwfire.org.uk/thatched-properties



Chimneys

Most chimney fires can be prevented by ensuring that the chimney or flue is clear of debris. To keep you and your family safe from fire, you should make sure that your chimney is swept regularly.

How often a chimney should be swept depends on the type of fuel being burned:

- Smokeless coals – at least once a year.
- Wood – up to four times a year.
- Bituminous coal – twice a year.
- Oil – once a year.
- Gas – once a year

Blocked or defective chimney flues also carry the risk of leading to carbon monoxide poisoning, so it's vital that you employ a professional and qualified chimney sweep to ensure that your home is safe.

In addition, it's entirely possible to be exposed to carbon monoxide fumes without being aware of it, so having a detector will alert you to the danger before it's too late.

Deliberate Fires

Are you worried about a child or young person who may be:

- Showing a great interest in fire?
- Starting fires, large or small?
- Showing evidence of burning items, for example in their bedroom or outside?

Fire-setting is dangerous and early intervention can greatly reduce the chances of it happening again. We can help to explain the dangers and consequences to the young person in a sensitive and informed manner with appropriate resources to stop the fire-setting habit as soon as possible. For further details go to dwfire.org.uk/firesetters or email firesetter@dwfire.org.uk to ask for advice, request a leaflet or to make a referral.



A threat of arson refers to a direct threat towards an individual, property or car, to purposely cause significant harm, and is a crime defined in the Criminal Damage Act 1971. **If you are a victim of an arson threat, call 999 and report it to the police immediately.** Help and support is available from a number of our partner agencies, which we can help you access.

The purpose of delivering a Threat of Arson Safe & Well visit is to provide enhanced fire safety advice for victims and their property, using a variety of risk-specific measures that can be utilised when a threat has been made.

Smoking Safely

- Stub it out properly and use a proper ashtray.
- Regularly empty the cooled contents from ashtrays into an outside bin.
- Consider smoking outdoors.
- Never smoke in bed.
- Keep matches and lighters out of reach of children.



- Never leave on charge or unattended overnight.
- Only use the charger that came with the vape.
- Unplug once fully charged.
- Regularly inspect the batteries and if damaged or leaking, stop using and replace it.



Medicines and Medical Devices

Health care equipment and products can help provide a better quality of life in your home. These can be provided by health care professionals. However, some items can increase the intensity of a fire, if you were to have one. By following these safety tips, the risk can be reduced.



If you use oxygen therapy to aid a medical condition, storage and the surrounding environment are very important. Oxygen can greatly increase a fire so, if you have oxygen stored in your home, please:

- Store the equipment out of direct sunlight and away from heat sources.
- Never smoke, or use e-cigarettes, whilst using oxygen.
- Don't use matches or any naked flames (such as candles) in the same room as the equipment.
- Keep oxygen away from gas stoves, portable or open fires.
- Ensure the oxygen supply is turned off when not in use.



Emollients and skin creams

These products are often used to treat eczema, bed sores, ulcers or psoriasis, and come as a cream, lotion, ointments, gels and sprays. They can be water based or contain paraffin.

The items alone are not hazardous; however, a build-up of the emollient on fabrics, such as bedding, clothing or furniture, can increase their flammability. If you use these products:

- Don't smoke. If you are a smoker, contact your GP to discuss alternative products.
- Take care when by a gas hob.
- Wash your clothing and bedding on a hot wash regularly to help reduce the build-up of products.
- Use the lowest paraffin base content - non-paraffin options are available, particularly for oxygen users.



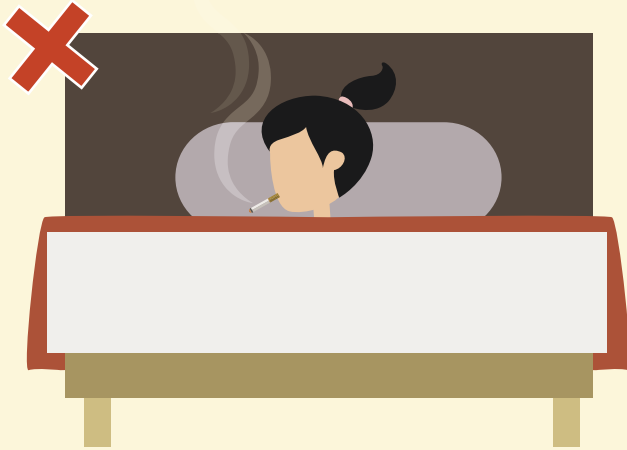
Medicines

Some prescribed and non-prescribed medicines can make you drowsy. If you are taking medication, always be extra cautious around ignition sources, such as candles and fires.

Consider using a cooking timer to alert you if you are using the oven, and never leave cooking on the hob unattended.

Airflow mattresses

If you have a pressure relieving device, such as an airflow mattress, or an overlay that is placed on a standard mattress, the following tips will help keep you safe:



- Never smoke in bed or whilst using the device.
- Never burn candles in the room where your device is kept.
- Never use matches or lighters near the device.
- Never use an electric blanket.
- Consider where the device will be plugged in - don't overload your sockets.
- Never put hot items, such as hairdryers or hair straighteners, on your bed.
- If you use emollients, check that your product is paraffin free.
- Use fire retardant bedding.

Supporting Information

Do you have children living in or visiting your home?

As soon as children are mobile you need to consider their safety:

- What are the hazards in the home?
- What can they reach? As children become more mobile, independent and inquisitive, you will need to consider how you help them understand how to stay safe, and what you can do to make a fire safe home for them.
- Help children understand what the smoke detector is and what they should do if it sounds. Teach them to “Get out, stay out and call 999”.
- Keep matches and lighters out of reach. Teach them this rhyme “Matches, lighters never touch; they can hurt you very much”.
- Talk to them about fire hazards as appropriate and help them make responsible safe choices.

For further advice, resources and activities for children of all ages, including our library of safety stories for younger children, please visit: dwfire.org.uk/education or scan the QR code.



Safeguarding

If you see something say something.



Abuse can come in many forms - domestic, physical, sexual, financial, neglect, emotional, modern slavery and organisational. It can happen anywhere, including in the home.

If you have a concern for the safety of a child or vulnerable adult, this is known as a safeguarding concern.

Safeguarding is ensuring everyone is safe and it is everyone's responsibility to act and look out for each other. Abusers rely on people not saying anything.

- If there is an immediate danger, for example you witness physical abuse, call the Police on 999.
- If you have concerns for a child, call your local council's children safeguarding team.
- For an adult (over 18) call the adult safeguarding team.

Your concerns will be taken seriously, and the matter will be dealt with sensitively, making sure the person is safe. This can be done anonymously if necessary.

If you have a gut feeling and something doesn't feel right, it probably isn't. Help children, young people and adults at risk to live free from harm and neglect by raising your concerns and making a safeguarding referral.

IF YOU SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING.



Stick me to your fridge!



Bedtime Checklist

- Close downstairs doors at night to stop fire from spreading
- Turn off and unplug electrical appliances, unless they are designed to be left on - like the freezer
- Check your **cooker** is turned off
- Check your **washing machine** or **tumble dryer** is off
- Turn **heaters** off and put up **fireguards**
- Put **candles** and **cigarettes** out properly
- Keep door and window keys accessible
- Make sure all **exits** are kept clear





**DORSET & WILTSHIRE
FIRE AND RESCUE**



Please visit our website for **FREE** safe and well advice: [dwfire.org.uk/safe-and-well-visits](https://www.dwfire.org.uk/safe-and-well-visits)

Alternatively call our safe & well administration team on freephone **0800 038 2323** during office hours or leave a message on our answer phone.

How to contact us



0800 038 2323



safeandwell@dwfire.org.uk



[dwfire.org.uk](https://www.dwfire.org.uk)



[@DWFireRescue](https://twitter.com/DWFireRescue)



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CHANGING & SAVING LIVES