



## RESIDENTIAL FIRE PREVENTION ADVISE

The first rule is to plan in advance. Think about your home and how you will get out in the event of a fire and discuss these with your family. With children you will need to revisit the message several times as they will have a fascination with fire and fire starting paraphernalia. Unfortunately, children under 10 cause over 6000 fires per year and fire related incidents kills dozens of children every year which equates to nearly half of all accidental deaths of children.

### Smoke Alarms

A smoke alarm is an absolute necessity. They are readily available in supermarkets and high street shops as well as from specialists such as your intruder alarm company. If your home covers more than one floor, you should fit at least one smoke alarm on each floor. You should:

Fit smoke alarms on each level in your home, at least 400mm from a wall and the nearest light fitting or beam on the ceiling in hallways and landings, NOT on walls or sloping ceilings up stairs.

**Keep them free from dust and test them regularly, ideally once a week.**

Consider buying a ten-year alarm; otherwise, change the batteries in your alarms every year.

Some local Fire and Rescue services install smoke alarms free of charge and provide excellent advice. You can contact yours to see if they run such a scheme.

### In The Kitchen

Fires whilst cooking account for half of all domestic fires in the UK so take extra care in the kitchen.

Do not leave children unattended in the kitchen, especially whilst cooking.

Keep your cooker clear of flammable objects, such as cloths, oven gloves and towels.

Ensure your oven and top oven/grill is cleaned periodically. An accumulation of cooking oils and fats can catch fire.

Ensure you oven is switched off when not in use and explain to children not to touch it.

Never leave flammable materials such as tea towels or plastic pots on the hob, even when switched off.

Make sure your toaster is cleaned out from time to time as any bread or an accumulation of bread crumbs caught inside can catch fire.

Again do not use it near any loose fabrics including curtains.

Take extra care when cooking with hot oil, and in the event of a pan fire **NEVER** try to extinguish with water. Cover the pan with a soaking wet tea towel and extinguish/remove from the source of heat.

### Fire Safety & Children

Talk to them and make them understand they should never play with fire or electricity. For younger children tell them the basics about what not to do. Do not think your discussion will frighten them. For the older children explain why and what to do in the event of a fire. Discuss your plans for getting out and staying out in a real fire.

Keep all sources of combustion and flammable liquids out of sight and out of reach of children. Preferably in locked cupboards

Explain to all children where your keys are to window and door locks. Make sure they are **ALWAYS** kept in the same place and first floor keys are on the first floor etc.

Explain they should never play with matches, lighters, candles, oil burners, open fires or gas fires and electrical devices such as electric fires, storage heaters and the cooker.

Explain they should never play near or leave toys on or near any sources of heat including table lamps.

Explain that if a candle or fire is knocked over or they see fire start to tell a grown up straight away and NOT to hide from it if they think they are in trouble.

Tell them the dangers of electricity, not to put things into sockets or pull on cabling. Switch off electrical appliances in children's bedrooms at night.

Put a fireguard in front of any open fire.

### Fire Prevention Around The Home

Look at your home to identify what would happen if a fire were to start. If there was an electrical fault could a small fire spread easily onto soft furnishings and catch hold. Is your sofa made of fire retardant materials. If it was made before 1988 it probably will not be and the foam filling will give off a huge amount of poisonous black smoke. If you are smokers, for example, do you leave your ashtrays on or near your sofa or your bed?

Close doors at night especially those to the kitchen – This will help isolate smoke and potentially help contain a fire therefore aiding a timely escape.

Avoid overloading electrical sockets and switch off mains appliances at night where possible, particularly those beneath curtains.

Do not put candles on television sets or near loose fabrics such as curtains, net curtains and blinds. A gust of wind can easily blow a net curtain towards an exposed flame.

Avoid putting piles of paper, such as magazines or newspapers next to radiators. Ensure flammable liquids and gases are not stored in direct sunlight.

### **Advice For Children In The Event Of A Fire**

You must explain very clearly with your children what to do in the event of a fire. They must know what to do in case there are no adults around or if the adults are incapacitated if there is a fire.

If they see smoke or flames tell someone straight away.

You must explain they must **NEVER** hide in a cupboard or under the bed if they are frightened. They could be missed by the emergency services when they conduct their searches with tragic consequences.

Raise the alarm, get out of the house with siblings if possible and call for help via a neighbour or 999 by landline or mobile phone.

Stress that if they can't wake Mummy or Daddy they must still get out.

Practice with them your address from an early age so it can be repeated over the telephone to the emergency services as calmly as possible. Tell them where the nearest phone is, landline or mobile.

Once out, never go back in to the house. Firemen can search far quicker and more safely for anything left behind, including pets.

Explain if they can't get out, block the bottom of the door with towels or clothing and call for help from the window. (remember to tell them where the keys are to the window)

If there is smoke explain to stay low and crawl along the floor where the air is cleanest.

Make sure they know the escape route out of the house and practice it regularly.

For multi-storey accommodation explain they must never use the lift and walk the fire escape with them.

## Advice For parents In The Event Of A Fire

Don't panic, think rationally, get the family together and out of the house as quickly and safely as possible.

1. Remember where your keys are to doors and windows.
2. Remember to stay low/crawl to avoid the worst of the smoke.
3. Call the emergency services for aid.

Can the fire be fought? If you have the right equipment and it is safe to do so and you are not endangering yourself or others you can try to fight the fire as long as you have a clear means of escape. **If you are in any doubt, GET OUT.**

Use your preplanned escape route where possible.

If you need to evacuate from the first floor call for help from a window. As a last resort if you are trapped and in mortal danger, the man should get down first by climbing/hanging from a window then dropping to the ground as safely as possible. The woman who is often the stronger in a crisis with children can then lower children down by hand, on duvets, towels or any other suitable cordage to the man on the ground, finally with the man helping the woman down last to help break her fall.

Once you are out do not re-enter the house until the emergency services have cleared it safe to do so.

Carbon monoxide (CO) is an invisible, tasteless, odourless gas that can kill without warning in a matter of hours. Symptoms can include headaches and nausea although most fatalities are caused while the victims are sleeping. You should ensure that all of your gas appliances and flues have been properly installed and are kept well-maintained and properly ventilated. Carbon Monoxide alarms are also widely available, are relatively inexpensive and are essential where any gas appliances are present in your home.

### Finally....

*For your information, Smoke Alarms, Heat Detectors and Carbon Monoxide alarms can be integrated to a domestic intruder alarm which when monitored will trigger a call to a monitoring centre 24 hours a day, 365 days per year. This means that the fire brigade will be called to your property in the event of an activation if you cannot be reached. If you are considering a Century 21 intruder alarm please do ask about these devices. They could well save your life and those of your loved ones.*

**CALL US NOW FOR A FREE QUOTE**

**Call: 0330 222 0021**