



**NFCC**  
National Fire  
Chiefs Council

# **COST OF LIVING**

**Steps to stay fire safe  
England**



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

You are around nine times more likely to die in a fire in the home if you do not have any working smoke alarms. 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 monthly.

**If you don't have any working smoke alarms, contact your local fire and rescue service who may be able to provide them for you.**

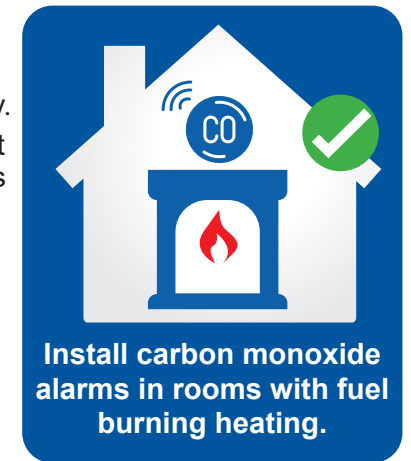
**If you rent, speak to your landlord who is required to provide them.**

**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.



**If you rent your home your landlord must ensure your home is equipped with smoke alarms. They must also make sure a carbon monoxide alarm is equipped in any room used as living accommodation which contains a fixed combustion appliance (excluding gas cookers).**

For more information, search **Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (Amendment) Regulations 2022** on the gov.uk website.

### 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

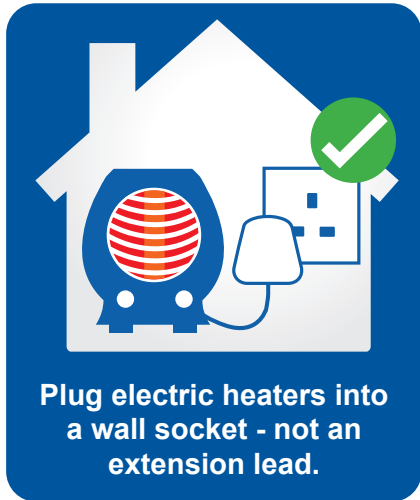
You may have had to change the way you heat your home. Follow our advice on using heating appliances to help stay fire safe.

### 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

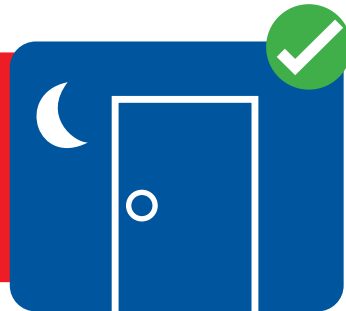
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/product-recalls-and-alerts>



- Don't 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:

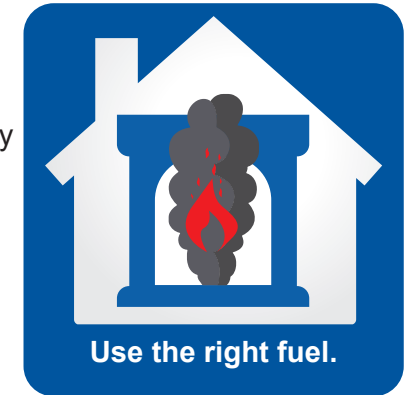
Close internal doors at night. It will help keep your rooms warm and reduce fire and smoke spread if a fire starts.



## 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 or ensure your landlord has provided CO alarms as required by regulations.



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](http://www.registermyappliance.org.uk). This doesn't just apply to new items you can register older or second-hand appliances too.



**Avoid running white goods and charging devices when you are asleep.**

- 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.



**Always check for safety markings on electrical items.**



## 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.



**Keep liquids away from electric blankets.**

## Candles

**Candles aren't an efficient way of heating a room and be very careful if using them for lighting. Around 30 per cent of fires 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



**Avoid using candles when tired or drinking.**



## Complete a **FREE Online Home Fire Safety Check**

Most fires in the home start accidentally. Understanding why fires start and what you can do to prevent them will help keep you, other people and your property safe.

For advice specific to you and your home, visit [www.ohfsc.co.uk](http://www.ohfsc.co.uk) and complete a free online home fire safety check.

**You can also complete one for a neighbour, friend or relative who may need help.**

**If you don't have working smoke alarms in your property, or would like fire safety advice, please contact your local fire & rescue service:**

**Remember, in the event of a fire...**

**GET OUT, STAY OUT  
AND CALL 999**



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