



When there is a fire...

Get out!

Stay out!



Harry Mathew, St Clement (Age 7)

# HOME FIRE SAFETY GUIDE



Jersey Fire & Rescue

...making Jersey a safer community

# HOME FIRE SAFETY GUIDANCE

Imagine waking up to the smell of smoke, and seeing your home filling with that smoke, flames destroying your possessions and being unable to get out.

**It isn't nice to think about, is it? But thinking about it and taking action can prevent it from happening.**

You can prevent most fires in your home, by being aware of the dangers and risks.

Please use this guide to assess fire safety in your home and take simple the recommended precautions that could save lives.

# SMOKE ALARMS

Get it!

Smoke alarms are life saving devices that detect smoke and give warning at the earliest stage of a fire, giving you the time to get to safety.

Smoke alarms cost from as little as £10 and can be bought from DIY stores, supermarkets and high-street stores.

## What sort should I get?

There are two main types of smoke alarm - ionisation and optical.

**Ionisation:** very sensitive to flaming fires, (ones that burn fiercely such as oil pan fires), they will detect this type of fire before the smoke gets too thick. They are not suitable outside kitchens or bathrooms, and are best used on landings above ground floor.

**Optical:** more sensitive at detecting slow burning fires (such as smouldering foam filled furniture and overheated wiring). Optical alarms are less likely to go off accidentally, and are best for ground floor hallways and homes on one level.

As both slow burning and flaming fires are common, for the best protection you should install one of each type. However, if you can't have both, it's still safer to have one smoke alarm than none at all.

**Ensure your alarm has one of these approval stamps on the packaging.**



# SMOKE ALARMS

Install it!



## How many do I need?

Ideally one in every room except the bathroom and kitchen, but as a minimum:

If you live on one level, fit the alarm in the hallway between the living and sleeping areas.

If your home has more than one level, fit one alarm on the ceiling at the bottom of the staircase, and a further alarm on each landing.

## Where should I fit them?

Fit them on the ceiling, as near as possible to the centre of the room, hallway or landing. The alarm should be at least 30cm (12") away from any wall or light.

## Is there anywhere I shouldn't put them?

In the kitchen or bathroom - they can be accidentally set off by cooking fumes or steam.

In a garage used for car parking - they can be triggered by exhaust fumes.

On a wall - smoke rises straight upwards and will therefore activate an alarm on the ceiling more quickly, giving you more time to escape.

## How do I fit them?

Ideally, they should be screwed to the ceiling as per the instructions, however where this is not possible they can be stuck to the ceiling with grab adhesive or double sided sticky pads.

# SMOKE ALARMS

Check it!



Every year people are killed or injured in fires because their alarms failed to work, due to flat or missing batteries. To ensure you and your household are fully protected, follow this advice:

- ✓ **Once a month** (on the 1st day of each month) test the battery by pressing the test button until the alarm sounds. If the alarm ever starts to 'beep' regularly, replace the battery as soon as possible.
- ✓ **Twice a year** open the case and gently vacuum the inside to remove dust from the sensor. If it doesn't open, vacuum through the holes.
- ✓ **Once a year** change the battery (unless it is a 10-year alarm). Consider using an anniversary or birthday as a reminder and put a note in your calendar or phone.
- ✓ **After 10 years** it is best to replace your smoke alarm with a whole new unit.

**GET IT, INSTALL IT, CHECK IT - Smoke Alarms Save Lives**

# ESCAPE PLAN

## Plan A (If you can get out)



When a fire starts, it can grow and spread very fast. Anyone inside the building on fire only has a few short minutes to get to safety, and it can be very difficult to think straight in an emergency. The most important thing is for everyone to get to safety.

### Be prepared by making a plan of escape

- ✓ Plan an escape route and make sure everyone knows how to escape.
- ✓ The best escape route is the normal way in and out of your home.
- ✓ Choose a second escape route in case the first one is blocked by fire.
- ✓ Keep both escape routes clear of obstructions.
- ✓ Make sure everyone knows where the door and window keys are kept and always keep them there.
- ✓ Make sure any children know what to do if the alarm goes off and how to call 999.
- ✓ Keep a copy of the building's address by the phone for them for anyone who may not know it off by heart.

### Have household fire drills

Have at least two fire drills every year, where every member of the household practices the escape plans. Hold one during the day and another at night, and start the drill by pushing the test button on one of the smoke alarms.

# ESCAPE PLAN

## Plan B (If you're trapped in a room)



Things don't always go according to plan, so we always need a Plan B. Your escape plan is no different. What will you do if your planned escape route is blocked and you cannot get out?

- ✓ Get everyone into one room - ideally one that has a window that opens and phone signal.
- ✓ Put bedding or cushions around the bottom of the door to block the gap and stop the smoke coming in.
- ✓ Open the window to shout and attract help.
- ✓ Phone 999 and tell them your address and which room you are in.
- ✓ When the fire crews arrive, shout and wave clothing to let them know where you are.
- ✓ If you're on the ground or first floor, you may be able to escape through the window - use bedding to cushion your fall and lower yourself - don't jump. Remember to lower any children or vulnerable adults first.

# CANDLES & SMOKING



Cigarettes and candles are the cause of many fires in the home. Following the advice below will help reduce the risks they pose:

## Candles

- ✓ Always use candles and tea lights in purpose-made holders or bases that won't fall over. Be especially careful with tea lights as they get hot enough to melt plastic.
- ✓ (TV tops and plastic baths are regular victims of tea lights).
- ✓ Don't put lighted candles on shelves, they can set fire to the shelf above.
- ✓ Make sure they are completely extinguished when finished with. Don't leave candles burning when you go out of the room.

## Smoking

- ✓ Never smoke in bed or when you are drowsy and sitting in a comfortable chair - it's easy to fall asleep and allow your cigarette to set light to your bedclothes or furniture.
- ✓ Don't leave a cigarette burning in an ashtray - it can easily overbalance.
- ✓ Make totally sure all cigarettes are out before you go to bed. Don't empty your ashtray into the bin before going to bed; put water in them and empty them into an outside metal bin in the morning.
- ✓ Keep your lighters, matches and smoking materials out of the reach of children; child-resistant lighters or matchboxes are available.

## E-cigarettes

- ✓ Never leave e-cigarettes on charge unattended for long periods.
- ✓ Don't mix components of different e-cigarettes.
- ✓ Only use the charger supplied.
- ✓ Ensure the e-cigarette carries CE certification.

# KITCHEN SAFETY



Over half of fires in the home start in the kitchen, and the majority of them are due to people leaving their cooking unattended or just being careless.

- ✓ Do not leave pans unattended on the hob. Take them off the heat if you have to leave the kitchen.
- ✓ Keep the top of the cooker and hob clean and clear of storage.
- ✓ Beware of touch screen hobs as pets have been known to accidentally turn a ring on – turn off at the wall when not in use.
- ✓ Never leave young children alone in the kitchen and keep matches and lighters out of reach.
- ✓ Keep your cooker and grill clean, a build-up of grease and fat can start a fire.
- ✓ Keep toasters away from curtains and wires and clean them out regularly.
- ✓ Make sure your electrics (leads and appliances) are well away from the sink.
- ✓ Spark devices are safer for lighting gas cookers than matches or lighters as they don't have a naked flame.
- ✓ When you have finished cooking make sure you have switched off the oven and hob.
- ✓ Don't put anything metal in the microwave.

**REMEMBER - drinking alcohol while cooking don't mix, don't cook when drunk!**

# OIL PANS & DEEP-FRYING



Oil and chip pan fires are still responsible for destroying kitchens and homes, and injuring people on a regular basis. We recommend you change your traditional chip pan for an electric deep fat fryer or an air fryer instead, they have thermostats which will prevent the oil from overheating and causing a fire.

## If you do choose to use a traditional oil pan, follow these tips to stay safe:

- ✓ Never fill the pan more than a third full of oil.
- ✓ Make sure the food you put in is dry to prevent splashing of hot oil.
- ✓ If the oil starts to smoke, it is too hot - do not put food in, turn off the heat and allow the pan to cool.

## If your pan catches fire:

- ✓ **Do not** move the pan and never throw water on the fire - it will make the oil explode, engulfing the kitchen in a fireball.
- ✓ Turn the cooker off, if it is safe to do so.
- ✓ Close the kitchen door and get everyone out of your home, closing all other doors as you go.
- ✓ Call 999 and stay out of the building.

# ELECTRIC APPLIANCES

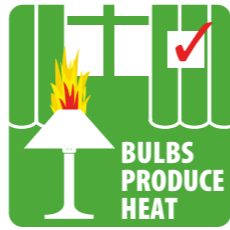


## What to check for:

- ✓ **Hot plugs, sockets and fuses that blow regularly, flickering lights and browning or scorch marks on sockets or plugs** - these are all signs of loose wiring or other problems that should be fixed.
- ✓ **Badly wired plugs** - if you can see the coloured wires, they can come loose and debris can get into the plug.
- ✓ **Split or frayed power leads** - these should not just be taped over; they should be replaced.
- ✓ **Overloaded sockets** - too many electrical appliances plugged into one socket can cause overheating. It is safer to use a strip adaptor on a lead rather than a block adaptor. Don't plug an adaptor into an adaptor and don't overload it, the total current plugged into the adaptor should not exceed 13 amps (for example: a TV may use a 3amp plug and a vacuum cleaner a 5amp plug. A kettle alone uses 13amps).
- ✓ **Cables under rugs or carpets** - they can wear through without anyone noticing.
- ✓ **Servicing** - electrical appliances (especially ones that run at high speeds like washing machines) should be serviced every year.
- ✓ **Correct fuses** - use the correct fuse as they are specifically designed to prevent overheating.
- ✓ **Correct chargers** - use the charges provided by the manufacturer of the electrical device, avoid cheap replacement chargers.
- ✓ **Standard safety symbols** - make sure the electrical appliance has one of these before buying.



# AIRING CUPBOARDS



A number of accidental home fires in Jersey have started inside airing cupboards – keep an eye out for the following signs that could indicate a problem with your immersion heater:

- ✓ Excessively hot water coming out of the taps.
- ✓ Excessive noise or bubbling from the hot water cylinder.
- ✓ Hot water coming out of cold water taps.
- ✓ Steam or condensation in the roof space.
- ✓ Unusual heat on the sides of the cold water cistern (tank) in the loft.
- ✓ Discolouration (brown or yellow staining) to the electrical plates, cables or switches.

**Do not** place any items (towels, clothing) directly on top of the hot water cylinder or hung on any of the wiring. If you have any concerns over your immersion heater or airing cupboard, or have noticed any problems with its operation, then get a qualified electrician to check your system over.

# LIGHTING

- ✓ Don't position lights or bulbs near curtains or other fabrics - the heat could set the fabric alight.
- ✓ Never exceed the maximum wattage recommended on lamp shades and fittings.
- ✓ Where possible, consider the use of LED lighting/bulbs – they don't use as much electricity or get too hot.

# ELECTRIC BLANKETS & HEATING

The following tips can help you keep warm in the winter months with peace of mind.

## Portable Heaters

- ✓ Keep them clear of curtains and furniture.
- ✓ Never dry washing on or near them.
- ✓ Sit at least one metre (three feet) away from them.

## Open Fires

- ✓ Always use a fire guard to prevent sparks spitting out of the fireplace.
- ✓ Have your chimney swept regularly. We recommend getting them cleaned twice a year.
- ✓ Don't overfill fire baskets.

## Outside/garden heaters

- ✓ Always change gas cylinders outside, never inside your home or garage.
- ✓ Replace any cracked or damaged hose as they may leak gas.
- ✓ Check for leaks after fitting a new cylinder using warm soapy water – look for telltale bubbles which indicates a leak.
- ✓ Tighten any nuts using the correct size spanner and never rely on just hand tight

## Electric blankets

- ✓ When storing your electric blanket, it is essential not to fold it as this can damage the internal wiring. Store them flat (under your mattress) or rolled up.
- ✓ Get your blanket checked regularly; keep a look out for the annual electric blanket testing days on our social media pages.
- ✓ Never use the blanket if it is wet or damp.
- ✓ Examine your blanket regularly for signs of wear or damage.
- ✓ If your blanket is over 10 years old, consider disposing of it and buying a new one.

# FIRE!

## WHAT YOU SHOULD DO



- ✓ **Meet** at an agreed point.
- ✓ **Don't waste time** investigating or rescuing material possessions.
- ✓ **Before you open a door**, check it with the back of your hand. If it's warm, don't open it - the fire is on the other side. Remember to shut all doors behind you.
- ✓ **If there is a lot of smoke**, keep low as the air is clearer. Crawl down any stairs backwards - you'll be less likely to fall.
- ✓ **Never use lifts in a fire.**
- ✓ **Don't go back in** - many people are seriously injured attempting to rescue pets or collect valuables. Use a mobile, neighbours phone or telephone box to call 999 and wait outside for the Fire and Rescue Service.
- ✓ **Wave down the Fire Engines** when you see them coming.

### If your clothes are on fire

- STOP!** Don't run around - you will fan the flames and make them burn faster.
- DROP!** Lie down - this makes it harder for the fire to spread and reduces the effect of flames on your face and head (flames burn upwards).
- ROLL!** Roll around - rolling smothers the flames. You could also smother the flames with heavy material like a coat or blanket.

# CALLING 999

As soon as you know there is a fire, call 999. These calls are free. The more information you give to the Fire and Rescue Service, the quicker they can get to you and do their job.

You will initially speak to the operator who will ask which service you require, ask for the Fire and Rescue Service. They will then transfer you to a Control Room Officer who will deal with your call and mobilise the fire crews.

- Speak slowly and clearly.
- Give the full address of your home including parish and post code.
- Providing a nearby landmark will also be helpful.
- Say what is on fire - eg: kitchen fire, in a two-storey house.
- State if anyone is trapped and explain what room they are in - this information can be passed to the fire crews before they reach your home.

**REMEMBER - Get Out, Stay Out and Call 999**





For more advice on home fire safety see: [gov.je/fire](https://www.gov.je/fire) or phone (01534) 445933

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