



STAY  
FIRE  
SAFE

At RHP we place an absolute priority on fire safety across all our customers' homes.



It's our legal duty to keep you, your family, and your neighbours safe and make sure you can easily escape from your home if a fire breaks out in your block.

This leaflet explains the measures we take to keep you safe, as well as the common fire risks in your home and how to reduce them.



## How we keep you fire safe



- ▶ We carry out gas and fire safety checks before you move in. This includes testing any gas appliances, the electrical wiring, making sure fire doors are working and that all escape routes are clear.
- ▶ A linked smoke alarm system is provided in converted blocks and our new-build properties are fitted with smoke alarms in line with current building regulations. All other homes have smoke alarms installed during upgrades or when they're empty. Get in touch if you don't have a smoke alarm in your property.
- ▶ In blocks of flats, we make sure communal areas and general building facilities are well maintained and check the electrics, gas, and where fitted, the communal fire alarm.
- ▶ We have to make sure communal areas remain clear and free from obstructions. Caretakers regularly inspect all blocks for safety issues, identifying repairs and removing items left in the communal areas.
- ▶ During our annual gas safety check our specialist contractor tests your smoke and carbon monoxide detector.
- ▶ If you live in a flat, we inspect your flat entrance door once a year.
- ▶ We use third-party accredited fire risk assessors to make sure your building meets fire safety standards and correct it when we find gaps. You can view this report through your online account at [www.rhp.org.uk](http://www.rhp.org.uk).



# How you can keep fire safe



The best way to keep your home safe from fire is to understand common risks and how to reduce them. Visit [www.london-fire.gov.uk](http://www.london-fire.gov.uk) and use the home fire safety checker to get tailored advice for your home.

- ▶ Make sure everyone in your home knows and has practised the escape plan and route.
- ▶ If you or anyone you live with might find it difficult to escape quickly without help in an emergency, make extra plans to get them to safety.
- ▶ Make sure everyone in your home understands what to do in a fire.
- ▶ If any of your smoke alarms sound, never assume it's a false alarm.
- ▶ Don't try and tackle fires yourself – leave it to the professionals.

If your clothes catch fire, don't run. Try and remember '**STOP, DROP, ROLL**' – which means:

- ▶ **STOP:** don't run, you will make the flames worse.
- ▶ **DROP:** lie down on the ground at once.
- ▶ **ROLL:** this should help to extinguish the flames. If someone else is on fire, try to use heavy fabric or a fire blanket to smother the flames.



# If you live in a flat and there's a fire in your block



Purpose-built maisonettes and blocks of flats are built to give you some protection from fire.

This means walls, floors and doors can hold back flames and smoke for 30 to 60 minutes.

- ▶ You're usually safer staying put and calling **999**.
- ▶ Tell the fire brigade where you are and how to reach you.

## If there's a fire in your flat

- ▶ Take the normal way out but don't use the lift.
- ▶ Keep door keys where everyone in your home can find and easily access them.
- ▶ Don't waste time investigating what's happened or rescuing valuables – remember, get out, stay out and close the door behind you.
- ▶ If there's smoke, keep low where the air is clearer.
- ▶ Shout 'FIRE' to alert other people in your home and block.
- ▶ Before you open a door, check if it's warm with the back of your hand. If it is, don't open it: there may be a fire on the other side.

- ▶ Help others on their way out who may be in difficulty.
- ▶ Move quickly and safely to exit the building.
- ▶ Close doors behind you to slow down the spread of fire and smoke.
- ▶ Call **999** as soon as it's safe to do so.
- ▶ Never go back into the building once you're safely outside.

## If your escape route is blocked, you should:

- ▶ Get everyone into one room, ideally with a window and a phone. Close the door and put bedding or soft materials around the bottom of the door to block the smoke, then open the window and shout '**HELP, FIRE**'.
- ▶ Call **999** if you've got a phone with you – be ready to describe where you are and the quickest way to reach you.
- ▶ Try and stay on the line and act on the advice provided.

## If you live in a house



- ▶ The best route is the normal way you come in and out of your home.
- ▶ Plan a second route in case the first one is blocked – consider ground floor windows.
- ▶ Take a few minutes to practice your escape plan regularly.
- ▶ Keep door and window keys where everyone you live with can find them – for example, on hooks behind curtains, or in boxes on windowsills.
- ▶ If you've got security gates or shutters, make sure they can be easily opened from the inside without a key.
- ▶ Call **999** if you've got a phone with you – be ready to describe where you are and the quickest way to reach you.
- ▶ If you're on the ground or first floor, you may be able to escape through a window. Don't jump – use soft materials to cushion your fall and lower yourself down carefully.
- ▶ Try and stay on the line and act on the advice provided.

### If your escape route is blocked, you should:

- ▶ Get everyone into one room, ideally with a window and a phone. Close the door and put bedding or any soft materials around the bottom of the door to block the smoke, then open the window and shout '**HELP, FIRE**'.

### Contact us

If you or anyone living with you has a health or mobility concern that may affect your ability to self-evacuate or put you at greater risk in the event of fire, please get in touch. Let us know if you use any medical equipment such as oxygen bottles.

Details of what to do in case of fire are also displayed on notices in the communal areas of your building.



## Stay safe in communal areas



**Keeping your home and estate safe is a top priority for us, but we can't do this on our own:** we need you to work with us to keep everyone safe. Leaving items in communal areas can block emergency exit routes and prevent the fire brigade and our employees and contractors from carrying out their duties. If items are set alight, they give off toxic smoke and gas which might reduce your visibility. They could also explode or cause the fire to spread more quickly.

### For everyone's safety:

- ▶ no items should be kept in communal areas: either by you or visitors to your home
- ▶ only purpose-made door mats are permitted
- ▶ our clear communal areas policy can be found on our website.

If we find any items in communal areas, we'll remove them. If someone continues to leave or store items, we may take legal action – including

enforcement under the terms of their tenancy or lease. Only purpose-made door mats are permitted.

Outside the building, no items should cause an obstruction, trip hazard, potentially be flammable or have a potential to cause injury; for example, a motorbike parked close to the building.

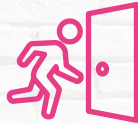
### You should:

- ▶ never store personal items in intake cupboards
- ▶ always keep meter cupboards locked shut when not in use
- ▶ always keep stores locked shut when not in use.

If an item is removed and you'd like it back, you will need to get in touch and pay removal and storage costs. The cost is non-negotiable: it's set by us. When we return items, you'll need to be home, and we'll deliver them to an agreed collection point.

If you have any large or bulky items of household waste, you can arrange for them to be removed through your local council.

## Stay fire door safe



Fire doors are an integral part of any building's fire protection system. Fire doors are important because they keep fire and smoke in the room or compartment where it starts and stop it from spreading to other areas of the building.

### To help us keep escape routes safe and accessible for everyone:

- ▶ You must never change your front door without getting our permission first. If you've changed your front door in the past without letting us know, please get in touch as soon as possible.
- ▶ You must not tamper with the self-closing device. Leave it connected to the door. The door closer is an important part of the fire door, as it makes sure the door closes into the frame. It is critical in case of an emergency, so the fire and smoke do not spread.
- ▶ Do not leave the doors propped open or unattended.
- ▶ Make sure the letter box doesn't get damaged.
- ▶ Report any damage to your door and / or door frame to us immediately.

### Do not alter your fire door!

Never carry out repairs or work on your fire door. This can damage it and make it less likely to work properly in an emergency.

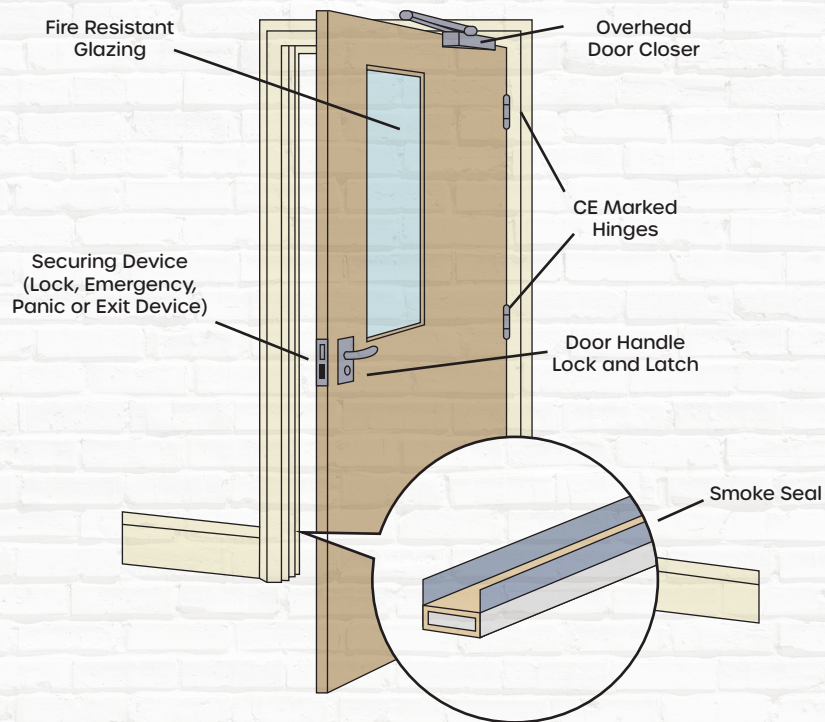
- ▶ Don't drill into your door or cut it in any way.
- ▶ Don't paint over the seals on the door's edges, top or within the frames.
- ▶ Don't replace handles, hinges, or any hardware. Repairs must be carried out by a competent person.
- ▶ Don't drill holes for doorbell cameras through the door, or the door frame.

If you live in a flat, we have a legal duty to make sure your flat entrance door is in good condition and proper working order.

To satisfy the requirements we must carry out periodic inspections of your flat entrance doors. To keep you and your neighbours safe, you must let us into your property when we arrange these inspections. The inspection takes around 15 minutes.



# What makes a fire door work?



## Stay cooking safe



Fires are more likely to start in your kitchen than any other room in your home but there are lots of practical things you can do to keep the chance of a fire to a minimum.

### You should:

**Not leave cooking unattended on the hob or grill** - if you must leave the kitchen, turn off the heat.

**Keep saucepan handles out of reach of children.**

**Avoid cooking if you're very tired**, have been drinking alcohol or are taking medication that might make you drowsy. Order a takeaway - it's safer not to risk it.

**Be careful what you wear** - loose clothing can easily catch fire, so don't lean over a hot hob.

**Keep tea towels and cloths away from the cooker and hob.**

**Keep the oven, hob, cooker hood, extractor fan and grill clean** - fat and grease can ignite and cause a fire.

**Use spark devices to light gas cookers** - they're much safer than matches or lighters, as they don't have a naked flame.

**Double check the cooker and hob are turned off when you've finished cooking** - if you're forgetful (or someone you care for can be), take a photo if you have a smartphone, to remind you to double check every time.

**Check toasters are clean** and not placed under kitchen cabinets or close to anything that can catch fire.

**Never put anything metal in the microwave or toaster.**



## Stay BBQ safe



BBQs are not permitted on balconies or on communal grounds. Grass can be very dry and a fire can start and spread quickly. This puts people, homes, and wildlife in danger. If you'd like to BBQ at home, make sure it's in your private garden.

**Never use a BBQ indoors, in communal grounds, or on your balcony.**

**Position your BBQ on level ground** and keep it away from anything that could catch fire, like sheds, fences, trees, and tents.

**Never leave the BBQ unattended.**

Only use **enough charcoal to cover the base** of the BBQ.

**Don't use petrol, paraffin, or any flammable liquids on your BBQ** – firelighters are a much safer option.

**Be careful with fatty foods** as they can create violent flames.

**Keep children, pets, and garden games away** from the BBQ.

**Keep a bucket of water or sand nearby** to smother the BBQ in an emergency.

After cooking, **make sure the BBQ has cooled** before moving it.

Empty cold **ashes into garden soil, not into bins.**

**Don't drink too much alcohol** when using a BBQ.

**BBQs can stay hot for hours**, so be careful moving them. They also give off **carbon monoxide fumes** for several hours after they go out, so **don't bring them indoors** with you.



# Stay smoking safe



Smoking is the most common cause of fire fatalities. The best way to stay safe is to stub out the cigarettes for good. There's lots of support available at [www.nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking/](http://www.nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking/).

## Tips to smoke safely

**Make sure cigarettes are put right out** and disposed of properly. It's safer to smoke outside, but remember, **communal areas are no-smoking areas**.

**Never smoke in bed and avoid smoking on armchairs and sofas** – especially if you think you might fall asleep.

**Take extra care when you're tired**, taking prescription drugs or if you've been drinking alcohol.

**Use proper ashtrays**, which cannot tip over and stub cigarettes out properly.

**Don't balance cigars or cigarettes on the edge of an ashtray, or anything else** – they can tip and fall as they burn away and cause a fire.

**Don't leave lit pipes or cigarettes unattended.**

**Make sure smoking materials like ashtrays are out, cold and preferably wet them before throwing into a bin** – never use a wastepaper basket.

**Keep matches and lighters out of children's reach** and buy child-resistant lighters.

**Never smoke if you use healthcare equipment** like medical oxygen or have an air flow pressure relief mattress. If you use paraffin-based emollient creams, ask for non-flammable alternatives instead.

**Consider extra safety measures** like fire retardant bedding or nightwear.



## Stay electric safe



From overloaded extension leads to cheap chargers and white goods not fit for the job, electrical items are a common cause of fire. Since 2017, the London Fire Brigade have attended over 26,000 electrical fires connected to white goods, electric bikes and scooters, and faulty chargers.

## How we keep you electric safe

**Before we let out a property, we carry out an electrical installation check to confirm it's safe.**

We have a programme to re-inspect every rented property at least every five years and carry out any necessary repairs or remedial work. We only use qualified registered electricians to carry out electrical works and we make sure any electrical work complies with the Building Regulations.

You can help us keep you safe by allowing us into your home to carry out the electrical test or any other repairs needed.



## How you can keep electric safe (continued)



Never install, repair or service electrical appliances yourself. DIY wiring or electrical repairs can lead to electrical parts overheating, causing fires, shocks and death. Make sure anyone who does is registered with the Gas Safe Register (for gas appliances), the Heating Equipment Testing and Approval Scheme/HETAS for solid fuel appliances, or the Oil Firing Technical Association/OFTEC for oil appliances.

### You should also:

Make sure **electrical appliances have a British or European safety mark** when you buy them.

**Keep electrical appliances clean** and in good working order.

**Use the charger that came with your device** or electrical item.

**Never cover plugs or devices** when an item is charging.

**Only keep something plugged in for as long as it needs to charge**, and avoid doing this overnight.

**Empty fluff regularly** from tumble dryers.

**Switch hair appliances off** and leave them to cool on a heatproof surface.

**Never connect extension leads together.** This is called 'daisy chaining'. If an extension lead is too short, buy a longer one. You should always fully unwind drum extension leads to avoid overheating.

**Not block your escape route with anything**, including e-bikes and e-scooters. Store them somewhere away from the main through route.

**Try to keep to one plug per socket**, especially for high-powered appliances like washing machines.

Always **check you're using the right fuse**.

**Register white goods** – it could save your life if a product is recalled for safety reasons.

**Share your fire safety knowledge with the whole family** – check the kids' chargers, and make sure everyone knows how to use electric blankets safely.

Look out for scorch marks, flickering lights, hot plugs and sockets, fuses that blow or circuit-breakers that trip for no obvious reason. **These could all be signs of loose or dangerous wiring. If in doubt, contact us.**

To check whether your existing equipment has a fault and was recalled by the manufacturer, visit [www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk/product-recalls](http://www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk/product-recalls).



## How you can keep electric safe (continued)



### Portable heaters

**Electric heaters can be a great way to keep warm** – especially if you only want to warm up one room. However, they should be used with care. Over the last five years over 800 fires were caused by electric heaters, and one-third of those resulted in a fatality.

- ▶ Fires normally start when bedding, blankets or clothes are placed too close to heaters.
- ▶ People with mobility issues are especially at risk of tripping or falling onto a heater – placing them at a safe distance is even more important.
- ▶ Some kinds of heater also present a carbon monoxide risk – which can make you sleepy and less able to escape. That is why it's so important to always fit a carbon monoxide alarm in rooms with solid fuel, gas or paraffin heaters.

### If you have a portable heater, you should:

**Make sure it's well maintained**, not on a recall list and in good working order.

**Not take risks with old heaters** – if it's electrical and getting older, get it tested by a qualified electrician or buy a new one.

**Secure heaters against a wall** to stop them falling over, or fit wall-mounted heaters.

**Keep heaters well away from clothes, curtains and furniture** and never use them for drying clothes.

**Always sit at least one metre away from a heater** as it could set light to your clothes or chair.

**Turn a heater off and allow it to cool** before moving it.

## Stay candle safe



Candles are another common cause of home fires, so they need handling with care. To be safer you could swap your wax candles for flameless ones.

### Using candles safely

- ▶ Make sure you put out any candles when you leave the room and especially before bed.
- ▶ Candles should always be held firmly in heat-resistant holders and placed on a stable surface where they won't be knocked over.
- ▶ Keep them away from curtains, furniture, clothes, and hair.
- ▶ Be especially careful if you have a lot of flammable items in your home, like collections of books, magazines, or papers.
- ▶ Be aware that tea lights get very hot and can melt through plastic surfaces like a TV or bath. Use proper holders.
- ▶ To avoid accidents, keep candles and other naked flames out of reach of children and pets.

## Stay celebration safe



At Bonfire Night, Diwali, Halloween, and Christmas lots of us like to light candles, dress up, and display decorations – increasing the risk of fire. Make sure all decorations are kept away from naked flames.

Unfortunately, costumes don't have to be made to the same safety standards as regular clothes, which means they're a greater fire risk. If you're celebrating with fancy dress, check that costumes are in line with European standard EN71-2.

## Any questions?

If you've got any questions about fire safety in your home, our Customer Services Team is here to help.

If you'd like to speak to someone over the phone, call **0800 032 2433**.

You can also send us a message at [www.rhp.org.uk/contact-us/contact-form](http://www.rhp.org.uk/contact-us/contact-form).





Updated July 2024