



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

# Fire Safety in the Home





**There are  
over 170  
house fires  
every day in  
Wales**

**75% recycled**  
When you have finished with  
this leaflet please recycle it

G/325/07-08  
CMK-22-10-065 (002)  
© Crown copyright 2007

# Introduction

Each year firefighters in Wales attend over 2,000 accidental fires in the home. Most people can change something about their daily routine or simple things around the home to reduce their chances of having an accidental fire.

Most people are lucky enough to get out alive, but hundreds of people suffer injuries and 63 people have died in accidental house fires in Wales over the last three years.



# Smoke alarms

**A smoke alarm is a warning device that detects smoke at the earliest stage of a fire. It gives you vital time to get out alive.**

- If you do not already have smoke alarms at home you can call 0800 169 1234 and your local Fire and Rescue Service will fit them for free.
- Smoke alarms should be fitted on every level of your home, ideally on hallway or landing ceilings.
- Do not put a smoke alarm in the kitchen, bathroom or garage as it can be set off accidentally.
- Use the test button to test the smoke alarm battery once a week.
- Only remove batteries when you have replacements, only working smoke alarms save lives.
- You should clean dust from your smoke alarms using a vacuum cleaner twice a year.



# Cooking Safely

**Kitchen fires are the most common cause of accidental house fires in Wales. Each year about 1,000 fires at home are caused by cooking.**

- Never leave your cooking unattended.
- Do not use matches or lighters to light gas cookers. Spark devices are safer.
- Keep electrical leads and items which can catch fire easily away from the cooker and toaster.
- Keep the oven, toaster, hob and grill clean. A build up of fat, crumbs and grease can catch fire.
- Keep electrical leads and appliances away from water.
- Make sure saucepan handles do not stick out from the hob.



# Smoking

**Carelessness costs lives. Fires caused by smoking kill more people than any other type of fire. A cigarette can burn at temperatures of over 700°C.**

- Make sure you have completely extinguished smoking materials before leaving the house or going to bed.
- Do not empty ashtrays into bins; place them in a metal container and preferably outside.
- Avoid smoking if you are tired or have consumed alcohol as you may fall asleep and set furniture alight.
- Never smoke in bed.
- Keep matches and lighters out of reach of children.



**Put it out,  
right out!**

# Deep Frying



- Never fill your cooking pan more than one third full of oil.
- Use a thermostatically controlled electric deep-fat fryer. They can't overheat.
- If you deep-fry food, dry it before you put it in the hot oil. If the oil starts to smoke, turn off the heat and leave the pan to cool.

## **If your chip pan catches fire you should:**

- Close the kitchen door.
- Get everyone out of your home.
- Call 999 and ask for the Fire and Rescue Service.

## **Remember:**

- Turn off the heat only if it is safe to do so.
- Do not move the pan.
- Never throw water over the pan.
- Tackling fire is a job best left to professional firefighters.

**Never  
leave cooking  
unattended**

# Electrical safety

**Electrical appliances should have the British or European safety mark on it.**

## **Remember:**

- Hot plugs and sockets, fuses that blow for no reason, flickering lights, and scorch marks on sockets or plugs are signs of danger.
- Check electrical leads and plugs for wear and tear and faulty wiring. Frayed leads or exposed internal wires are fire risks and should be replaced immediately.
- Do not overload sockets – use one plug in each socket. If you have to use a fused adapter make sure you keep the output to no more than 13 amps.
- Keep electrical leads, plugs and appliances away from water.
- Keep electrical appliances clean and in good working order, and have them serviced regularly, particularly washing machines and tumble dryers that may be left on overnight.
- Never buy an electrical appliance without knowing it is safe to use. If the appliance is second-hand, always have it checked by a qualified electrician before you use it.
- Switch off and unplug electrical appliances if you are not using them, unless they are designed to be left on.



- Store electric blankets either flat or rolled up to protect the internal wiring.
- Only leave an electric blanket switched on overnight if it has thermostatic controls for safe all-night use. Otherwise, switch off and unplug it before you get into bed.
- Position portable heaters against the wall, never place them along your escape route.
- Do not place portable heaters near curtains or furnishings and never use them for drying clothes.
- Lights and bulbs can get very hot, be careful where you position them.



**Going out?  
Put it out!**

## Candles

**Treat candles as you would any naked flame. On average five fires a day are started in the UK by candles. It only takes a moment of distraction for a fire to start but the consequences can be tragic.**

- Keep candles away from anything that can easily catch fire like curtains, shelving, fabrics and other furnishings.
- Don't let candles fall over! You need to keep candles firmly upright in a proper holder.
- Always place candles on a heat resistant surface. Candles and tea lights can melt plastic surfaces like the tops of televisions and bathtubs.



- Don't lean across candles! You could set fire to your clothes or hair.
- Keep candles out of reach of children and away from pets.
- Always leave at least 10cm (4") between two burning candles.
- Don't let anything fall into the hot wax.
- Never leave a burning candle unattended and ensure that candles have been completely put out when you leave the room.

## Plan your escape and get out alive!

- Make sure everybody in the house knows what to do in a fire and how to escape safely.
- Plan your escape routes together. Make children aware that they should not hide if they hear a smoke alarm or are involved in a house fire.
- Keep exits clear at all times.
- Keep door and window keys to hand, and make sure everyone knows where they are kept.
- At night, close all the doors. You can protect your escape routes from smoke and fire this way. This is particularly important in homes where you would not be able to escape from a window, for example if you live in a tall house or a high rise flat.

## **If fire starts:**

- Try and keep calm.
- Get everyone out as quickly as possible.
- Do not waste time investigating or collecting valuables.
- If there is smoke, crawl where the air is clearer.
- Once outside, call 999 and ask for the Fire and Rescue Service.
- State your address clearly and give as much detail as possible.
- Once outside, stay outside.

## **If your escape routes are blocked**

- If you are on the ground or first floor, get out through a window. Use bedding to cushion your fall and lower yourself – don't jump.
- If you can't open the window, break the glass in the bottom corner. Cover jagged edges with a towel or blanket.
- If you cannot get out, get everyone into one room, preferably with a window and a phone. Put bedding around the door to block the smoke.
- Call 999 as soon as you are clear of the building. Use a mobile or neighbour's phone.

# If your clothes catch on fire

- Do not run around.
- Lie down and roll on the floor.
- If someone else is on fire, tell them to lie down then smother flames with a heavy material like a coat, blanket or fire blanket.
- Stop, drop and roll!

**For a free  
home fire  
safety check**

**please call**

**0800 169 1234**

**[www.fireflash.org](http://www.fireflash.org)**

**In the event of  
a fire - get out,  
stay out and  
phone**

**999**