



Fire safety

What you need to know

Please read this information
carefully and keep it somewhere
safe for future use.

Tendring
District Council



Fire safety

As your landlord, we carry out a range of measures to help protect you from the risk of fire. These include installing mains smoke alarms in all our properties and servicing these each year and carrying out an annual service and safety check of any gas heating appliances we have installed.

There are also a number of things that you can do to reduce the risk of a fire breaking out in your home, so please follow the guidance given in this leaflet:

Kitchen safety

- When cooking, avoid leaving children alone in the kitchen and keep matches and saucepan handles out of their reach.
- If you need to leave the kitchen whilst cooking, either take pans off the heat or turn the heat down.
- Keep tea towels and cloths away from the cooker and hob and be careful if you are wearing loose clothing as all of these can easily catch fire.
- Make sure that you check the cooker is properly turned off when you have finished cooking.
- Keep electrical appliances and their leads away from any sources of water.
- Make sure that your toaster is placed away from curtains and kitchen roll or anything else that could catch fire easily.

- Take extra care when cooking with hot oil as it sets alight easily. If the oil starts to smoke, it's too hot and you should turn off the heat and leave it to cool.



- If a pan does catch fire, you should turn off the heat if it is safe to do so and cover the pan with a damp cloth or blanket.

DO NOT USE WATER.

- Think about buying a thermostat controlled electric deep fat fryer as these can't overheat and are much safer.
- Consider buying a fire blanket or a small extinguisher for your kitchen.

Electrical safety

- Always check that you use the right fuse to prevent overheating.
- When you buy any electrical appliances check they have a British or European safety mark.
- Don't overload electrical sockets – try and keep to one plug per socket especially for high powered appliances, such as washing machines.
- Do not leave electrical items plugged in when you are not using them.
- Never use any electrical item that has a damaged flex and check for signs of faulty plugs or sockets, such as scorch marks.

Cigarettes

- Never smoke in bed or in a chair if you think you could fall asleep.
- Do not leave lit cigarettes, cigars or pipes unattended.
- Use deep ashtrays so that cigarettes cannot roll out and don't throw hot ash into a waste paper basket.
- Keep matches and lighters out of the reach of children.
- Take extra care if you smoke when you are tired, taking prescription drugs or if you have been drinking as you might fall asleep.



Candles

- Make sure that any candles you use are in a proper holder and are away from anything that might catch fire, such as curtains.
- Candles and tea lights can melt plastic surfaces, like the tops of televisions, so always make sure that you place them on a heat resistant surface.
- Make sure that you put candles out when you leave a room and check that they are completely out at night.
- Never leave children or any family pets or animals alone with lit candles.

Before you go to bed

You are more at risk from fire when you are asleep so it's a good idea to carry out a few simple checks before you go to bed:

- Close as many doors as possible to stop any fire that does start from spreading.
- Turn off and unplug electrical appliances unless they are designed to be left on like your fridge or freezer.
- Check your cooker is turned off.
- Don't leave the washing machine turned on.
- Turn any electric fires or other room heaters off.
- Make sure that any cigarettes or candles are put out properly.
- Make sure the route you would use to get out of your property is kept clear.
- Make sure that you keep the keys for any doors and windows in a place where everyone can find them.
- Never smoke in bed or leave lit cigarettes in ashtrays.



Plan ahead

If a fire breaks out in your property, you will only have a short time to get out so it is best to plan your escape route in advance.

- The best escape route is the normal way in and out of your home but, if possible, you should think of a second one in case this becomes blocked and make sure that all members of your household are aware of this.
- Make sure all exits and escape routes are kept free of obstructions.
- Take a few minutes to practice your escape plan.
- Test any smoke alarms weekly by pressing the test button.



What to do if there is a fire in your house

- Only attempt to put out a fire yourself if you are sure you can do it quickly or safely. Otherwise you should leave it to the professionals.
- Try and keep calm and get everyone out of the property as soon as possible.
- Don't waste time trying to find out what's happened or rescuing belongings.
- Smoke and fumes can kill. If there is a lot of smoke, get down as near to the floor as possible as the air will be clearer here.
- Before you open any door, check to see if it feels warm. If it is, don't open it as fire is on the other side.
- Call 999 as soon as you are clear of the building. Do not go back inside for any reason.
- If your escape route is blocked by fire it may be safer to stay put until the fire brigade arrives. Close the door of the room you are in and use towels or sheets to block any gaps under the door to stop the smoke coming in. Go to a window and call for help and wait to be rescued.



Escaping from fires in flats and maisonettes

If you live in a flat or maisonette, please also follow this additional advice:

- Flats and maisonettes are built to give you some protection from fire. Walls, floors and doors will hold back flames and smoke for a time so, if there is a fire somewhere else in the building you are usually safer staying in your flat until the fire brigade arrive unless heat or smoke is affecting you.
- If there is a fire in your flat, leave the building closing the door to your flat behind you.
- If there is a lot of smoke, get down as near to the floor as possible where the air will be clearer.
- If the block that you live in has a lift, do not use this in the event of a fire – use the stairs instead.
- Call 999 as soon as you are able to.



If you live in a block of flats or maisonettes that has shared corridors, landings or exits you should make sure that these are kept clear of all items that could cause an obstruction, safety hazard or increase the risk of fire.

Items left in these areas will be removed and those responsible for them could be subject to enforcement action and / or be charged for their removal

You should not smoke in any shared areas, such as hallways or landings – it's unsafe and also against the law.

If you live in a block of flats that has a fire alarm in its shared areas, you should alert your neighbours to any fire you discover as soon as possible by breaking the glass in the alarm but only if this can be done safely.

You should then leave the building, closing any doors behind you and assemble near to the designated Fire Assembly Point for your block. You should stay here until told it is safe to do anything else by a representative of the emergency services.



A communal hallway and escape route left in an unacceptable condition

Sheltered housing

If you live in sheltered housing, please follow the good advice given in this leaflet but also refer to the separate and specific guidance set out below about what to do in the event of a fire in your accommodation.



Discovering a fire

Any resident discovering a fire should immediately sound the alarm using the nearest fire call point.

Residents should not attempt to fight any fire.

If a fire has started in your flat or in a communal area in which you are present you should immediately vacate the building using the nearest available and safe fire exits.

Do not use the lift.

You should assemble at the designated emergency assembly point, a safe distance away from the building until otherwise directed by council staff or the emergency services.

Do not attempt to re-enter the building unless told to do so. Care should be taken on or near roads because of traffic.

On hearing the fire alarm

If you are in a flat:

If you are in your own or another flat you should remain where you are.

Close all doors but do not lock them. If you have a security chain on your door, these must not be used.

Do not open the door unless requested by a member of council staff or members of the emergency services.

Remain in the flat until directed otherwise by council staff or members of the emergency services.

If you are in a communal area:

If you are in a communal area of the building you should:

Evacuate the building by leaving at the nearest safe exit.

Do not stop to pick up personal belongings.

If possible close doors behind you.

Do not use the lift.

You should assemble at the designated emergency assembly point and remain a safe distance away from the building until otherwise directed by council staff or the emergency services.

Do not attempt to re-enter the building unless told to do so. Care should be taken on or near roads because of traffic.

