

SMOKE ALARMS

The best way to protect yourself and your home is to have properly installed smoke alarms. The Fire and Rescue Service will carry out a FREE home fire safety check and install smoke alarms where necessary.

Call 0800 169 1234 to arrange a visit.

Make sure that all smoke alarms are checked regularly. Test once a week and change the battery at least once a year if it doesn't have a 10yr battery.

Only remove the batteries when you have replacements, only working alarms can save lives.

You should also clean any dust from them using a vacuum cleaner nozzle at least twice a year.

Smoke alarms should be fitted on every level of the home, ideally on hallways or landing ceilings.

Do not put any smoke alarms in the kitchen, bathroom or garage, they can be set off accidentally.

PLAN YOUR ESCAPE

If your smoke alarm goes off do you know what to do?

You need to make an escape plan to get out alive.

Discuss your plan with everyone in your household, especially children, the elderly and disabled. Make sure they understand the reasons why you are doing this.

Your best escape route is your normal in and out entrances of your home, so make sure these are kept clear at all times.

Think of any difficulties you or your family may have in getting out, especially in the middle of the night.

Make sure everyone knows where to find door and window keys.

Consider a second escape route, in case the first one is blocked.

Work out the safest and quickest way to escape from each part of your house.

PRACTICE YOUR ESCAPE

Take a few minutes regularly to practice any escape routes in your home – you might think it will never happen to you.

Review your plan if you make any changes in your home.

Check that everyone can unlock and open doors and windows easily.

Remember to shut all doors behind you, day or night.

IN THE EVENT OF A FIRE

Check door handles with the back of your hand, if they are warm do not open.

If the door handle is cool, carefully open the door, then follow your chosen escape route crawling beneath any smoke.

If it is impossible to escape, try and get everyone into one room, preferably where there is a window and a phone – this will be easier for the fire fighters.

Once you are in a room, close the door and put cushions or bedding around the bottom of the door to try and block out any smoke.

Phone 999 – it is a very good idea if you keep a mobile phone handy.

Make your way to the window, open it, stay near it for fresh air and to let the fire fighters see you.

If you are on a ground floor, escape through this window, being careful of any broken glass.

If you are higher up, only consider this if you are in immediate danger, check your access to get out or if you have an internal fire ladder.

If you need to break a window, use a sharp object to break the glass in the bottom corner, then knock out the glass, be careful of sharp edges, make them safe by laying a towel or blanket over them.

If you are in immediate danger, throw any bedding out of the window and lower yourself to the ground, try and not jump.

Never go back into the building for anything – not even for pets, I know this is hard but you are putting your life in danger.

Wait for the Fire Service and give them as much information as possible.

If your clothes catch on fire – do not run around, lie down on the floor and roll side to side.

If someone else is on fire, tell them to lie down then smother them with something heavy like a coat or blanket.

Once you have escaped if the Fire Service have not been called, call them now.

You must try and speak calmly and slowly, they need all the information possible – your address, town, postcode. Explain if there is anyone trapped and what room they are in.