

Your guide to fire safety

Housing and Property Services



North
Tyneside
Council

Fire safety is the responsibility of everyone, and we all need to do our bit to keep each other safe. It is important everyone understands the fire safety procedures, especially in blocks of flats where it is very important to always keep corridors and walkways free of obstructions.

This booklet gives information about what to do if there is a fire in your home.

- Close the door to the room where the fire is located, if it is safe to do so
- Do not stop to collect personal belongings
- If you live in Sheltered accommodation, activate the nearest alarm
- Dial 999 and ask for the fire service
- Alert other people in your home
- Leave the premises and close the door behind you
- Remain at a safe distance away from the building
- Do not tackle the fire yourself
- Do not return to the building until authorised to do so

If you live in a flat with communal areas:

Every year, the council carries out inspections of the communal areas and tests the emergency lighting, smoke alarms and heat detectors in the buildings it manages. Our housing officers also regularly check communal areas to make sure they are clear of fire hazards.

If you live in a flat with a communal area and a fire starts, you should:

- Close the door to the room the fire is in and leave your flat
- Do not use the lift
- Raise the alarm, dial 999 and ask for the fire service
- If there is a fire in another flat, leave by the nearest available stairwell
- In the unlikely event that stairwells or corridors are smoke logged, stay in your flat with the door closed – if possible, call the emergency services to advise of your position

Fire doors

Fire doors are specialist doors that are designed and tested to withstand the effects of fire for a specified period.

An effective fire door delays the spread of smoke and flames from one area to another.

The brushes stop the spread of smoke.

Intumescent strips, which can be found either in the door or frame expand when heated creating a seal.

The door itself will withstand the spread of fire and smoke for a minimum of 30 minutes.

You must make sure:

- Fire doors are kept shut at all times
- No changes are to be made and the door must not be tampered with in any way. This includes removing the closing device, fitting your own locks, letterbox, spyhole, or vents.
- If your flat front door or any communal fire doors are damaged, report these immediately on 0345 2000 102.

How you can help avoid the risk of fire

As a resident, you can help avoid the risk of fire by:

- checking your smoke alarms regularly
- not storing flammable materials, like large amounts of paper, in your flat or communal areas
- not blocking escape routes with bulky items
- not wedging fire doors open - they must remain closed to prevent the spread of smoke and fire
- not smoking within the communal areas of the building
- not leaving cookers unattended when using the hob
- not using deep fat frying pans
- not storing petroleum gas or paraffin

Emergency access

Do not park your vehicle in any area designated for 'emergency vehicles only' or 'fire hydrants'.

How we protect you

Safety is our top priority.

These measures are in place to keep you safe:

Building safety checks

We carry out annual building safety checks. The aim of the check is to make sure that escape routes are always kept clear from rubbish and materials that would prevent residents from evacuating the building safely.

Fire doors are kept closed and in good condition. Any issues are identified are logged and fixed quickly.

Entry and exit doors are in good working order and outside escape routes are inspected.

Fire risk assessment

We carry out fire risk assessments to all open and enclosed blocks.

If you would like a copy of the latest fire risk assessment, please contact North Tyneside Council, contact details provided on the back of the back page.

Fire alarms

Your home is fitted with a smoke/fire detector which are tested annually.

Fire doors and fire compartmentation

Fire doors are used in communal areas to slow the spread of fire (for about 30 minutes to 1 hour).

Our flats are also built to slow the spread of fire from one flat to another (for about 30 minutes to 1 hour). Compartmentation contains and stops the spread fire and smoke from one area to another.

Emergency lighting systems

Some communal areas in the buildings are fitted with an emergency lighting system to help with evacuation. These are tested annually.

Building and system maintenance

All systems installed within your building are maintained and serviced to the relevant legislation. If you would like additional information on the maintenance, servicing, and inspection of your building please contact North Tyneside Council for further details.

What you can do to keep safe

Report any faults in your Home, as well as faults or damage in communal areas

To report a fault, call 0345 2000 102 or via the North Tyneside Council Website:

<https://my.northtyneside.gov.uk>

Make sure that you do what you can to prevent a fire from starting in your home.

Report any changes to your circumstances

If you have an illness or injury that limits your ability to move or respond, make sure you re-evaluate your escape plan.

Some tips on planning an escape route:

- ✓ Be prepared – Make an escape plan
- ✓ Make sure everyone in your property knows how to escape
- ✓ Make sure exits are kept clear
- ✓ The best route is the normal way in and out of your home
- ✓ Take a few minutes to practice your escape plan
- ✓ Review your plan if the layout of your home changes
- ✓ Keep door and window keys where everyone in your home can find them

Before you go to bed

- ✓ Make a bedtime check, you are more at risk from fire when asleep, so it's a good idea to check your home before you go to bed
- ✓ Close inside doors to stop a fire from spreading
- ✓ Turn off and unplug electrical appliances unless they are designed to be left on like your freezer
- ✓ Check your cooker is turned off
- ✗ **DO NOT** leave the washing machine on
- ✓ Put candles and cigarettes out properly
- ✓ Make sure exits are kept clear

In the kitchen

- ✓ Avoid leaving children in the kitchen alone when cooking on the hob. Keep matches and saucepan handles out of their reach to keep them safe
- ✓ Take extra care if you need to leave the kitchen while cooking, take pans off the heat or turn them down to avoid risk

- ✓ Make sure saucepan handles don't stick- so they don't get knocked off the stove
- ✓ Take care if you're wearing loose clothing – they can easily catch fire
- ✓ Keep tea towels and cloths away from the cooker and hob
- ✓ Double check the cooker is off when you've finished cooking
- ✓ If you have an extractor fan, turn it on whilst cooking
- ✗ **DO NOT** put anything metal in the microwave
- ✓ Check toasters are clean and placed away from curtains and kitchen rolls
- ✓ Keep the oven, hob and grill clean and in good working order. A build-up of fat and grease can ignite a fire
- ✓ Take extra care whilst using chip pans and/ or deep fat fryers

Furniture

- ✓ Always make sure that your furniture has the fire-resistant permanent label

Electric blankets

- ✓ If using electric blanket, don't leave it folded as this damages the internal wiring, store them flat or rolled up instead
- ✓ Unplug your blanket before you get into the bed, unless it has a thermostat control for safe all-night use
- ✓ Try not to buy second hand blankets
- ✓ Check regularly for wear and tear

Electrics

- ✓ Keep electrics (leads and appliances) away from water.
- ✓ Always check that you use the right fuse to prevent overheating
- ✓ Make sure an electrical appliance has a British or European safety mark when you buy it.
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- ✓ Certain appliances, such as washing machines, should have a single plug to themselves, as they are high powered.
- ✓ Try and keep to one plug per socket.
- ✓ Keep your eyes peeled for signs of dangerous or loose wiring such as scorch marks, hot plugs and sockets, fuses that blow, circuit-breakers that trip for no obvious reasons, or flickering lights.
- ✓ Check and replace any old cables and leads, especially if they are hidden from view.
- ✓ Unplug appliances when you're not using them or when you go to bed.
- ✓ An extension lead or adaptor will have a limit to how many amps it can take, so be careful not to overload them.

Portable heaters

- ✓ Try to secure heaters up against a wall to stop them falling over.
- ✓ Keep them clear from curtains and furniture and never use them for drying clothes
- ✗ **DO NOT** use portable gas heaters

Smoking

- ✓ Stub cigarettes out properly and dispose of them carefully. Put them right out.
- ✓ Never smoke in bed
- ✓ Use a proper ashtray - never a wastepaper basket.
- ✓ Make sure your ashtray can't tip over and is made of a material that won't burn.
- ✓ Do not leave a lit cigarette, cigar or pipe lying around - they can easily fall over and start a fire.
- ✓ Take extra care if you smoke when you're tired, taking prescription drugs, or if you've been drinking. You might fall asleep and set your bed or sofa on fire.
- ✓ Keep matches and lighters out of children's reach.
- ✓ Consider buying child resistant lighters and match boxes.

Candles

- ✓ Put candles out when you leave the room, and make sure they're put out completely at night.
- ✓ Use a snuffer or a spoon to put out candles. It's safer than blowing them out when sparks can fly.
- ✓ Children shouldn't be left alone with lit candles.
- ✓ Make sure any tea lights are kept in a suitable holder.
- ✓ Make sure candles are secured in a proper holder and away from materials that may catch fire – like curtains.

Keep communal doors closed

- ✗ **DO NOT** prop open any doors in the corridors
- ✓ These are designed to stop fire spreading along the corridor.

Keep corridors, stairs and landings clear

- ✗ **DO NOT** keep furniture, motorbikes or bicycles, toys or any other large item in these areas. These could cause an obstruction or trip somebody up.

Keep your mobility scooters, E scooters and E bikes inside your home

- ✗ If you have a battery powered mobility device, **DO NOT** keep or charge it in communal area. They can cause an obstruction and block escape routes. This can increase the likelihood of a fire.
- ✗ When stored in your home **DO NOT** keep them in a place where they can hinder your escape route.

These devices are powered by batteries that are highly combustible. You should always make sure that they are charged in a clear space and only during the day in your home.

Keep your wheelchair in your home

- ✓ If you have a wheelchair, keep it in your home.
- ✗ **DO NOT** Keep it in communal corridors. This is because they can cause an obstruction and block escape routes.

Don't Smoke In Communal Areas

You can smoke in your flat, or on any balcony that is used by you or your family.

YOU CANNOT smoke in any shared part of the building

This Includes:

- corridors
- stairs
- landings
- balconies
- common rooms
- laundries
- shared kitchens or toilets

It is against the law to smoke in these areas

Dispose of your rubbish properly

- × **DO NOT** leave rubbish or unwanted furniture in corridor. This is a fire hazard and could cause an obstruction or injury to someone else.
- × **DO NOT** throw anything, including waste, from a balcony or window.

Keep the building secure

- ✓ Please try and keep the building secure.
- ✓ Always close the entrance door behind you, and never prop it open.
- ✓ Anybody who has official business in the building will have their own key or will carry identification with them.
- ✓ Always ask to see identification if somebody asks you to let them into the building.

Park considerately

- ✓ Please Park considerately outside your home, in marked parking areas if possible.
- ✓ Do not park in any hatched area, or directly outside any access or fire exit door
- ✓ Make sure that you leave enough space for ambulances and fire engines to get to flats and turn around.

Smoke alarms

- ✓ It is extremely important that you have a working smoke alarm in your home
- ✗ **DO NOT** tamper with the smoke detectors in your home. They are there to give you an early warning in the event of a fire and could save your life.

Contact

Housing enquiries

Telephone: 0345 2000 102

Further information

Get [fire safety advice](#) from the Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service.

FOR FURTHER ADVICE ON FIRE SAFETY VISIT www.twfire.gov.uk

If you need us to do anything differently (reasonable adjustments) to help you access our services, including providing this information in another language or format, please contact **Housing and Property Services on 0345 2000 102.**