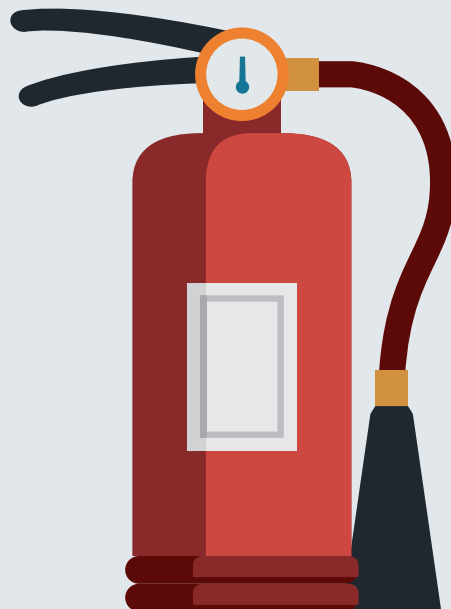


Fire Safety

in your home



Fire Safety in Your Home

- **Over 200 people die in house fires each year - incidents involving cooking, smoking and electrical appliances are the top three causes of fire.**
- **Faulty electrics (appliances, wiring and overloaded sockets) cause around 6000 fires in the home each year.**
- **Not having a working smoke alarm makes the risk of dying in a fire at least four times greater.**

What can you do?

One of the most important things you can do is to make sure that the fire safety devices in your home are maintained and fit for purpose, and to prepare yourself and your family in case of a fire:

Smoke Alarms

- ✓ Test your smoke alarms, ideally every week, but at least once a month. Every three months clean your alarm with a soft brush or vacuum cleaner.
- ✓ If you have any concerns that your alarms aren't working properly, contact us as soon as possible.

Cooking

A high number of fires start in the kitchen, so make sure that yours is safe by...

- ✓ Never leaving cooking unattended.
- ✓ Keeping cooking areas clear from combustible items like tea towels and food packaging.
- ✓ Cleaning your oven and grill regularly to avoid a build-up of fat and grease.
- ✓ Checking on the cleanliness of any extraction units in the kitchen.
- ✓ Not moving a pan if it catches fire. Turn off the heat if you can do so safely.
- ✓ Never putting water on an oil pan fire – this will make the fire much worse.

Electrical fires

- ✓ Remember to turn off electrical appliances, particularly overnight.
- ✓ Purchase appliances from reputable retailers, and check that they have a British or European safety mark on them.

- ✓ Don't leave washing machines or tumble dryers running when you are out of your home or overnight.
- ✓ Don't overload your plug sockets or extensions - for higher powered appliances like washing machines, kettles and fridges, keep to one plug per socket.
- ✓ Check appliances for signs of damaged or frayed cable
- ✓ Use a proper adaptor for non-UK electrical appliances.
- ✓ Do not run cables underneath carpets and rugs.
- ✓ If you need to replace your mobile device charger, purchase one from a reputable retailer.

Portable heaters

- ✓ Use oil filled heaters, and avoid halogen, electric bar, or convector heaters.
- ✓ Put the heater on a level surface, and away from anything that could knock it over.
- ✓ Make sure the heater is at least a metre away from combustible materials, such as paper, furniture or curtains. Never use it to dry your clothes.
- ✓ Never leave the heater unattended when it's turned on.
- ✓ Never power a heater from an extension lead – they can easily be overloaded.
- ✓ Regularly inspect your heater for damage and deterioration. If it isn't in good condition, don't use it.

Smoking

Smoking is not allowed with communal areas of blocks of flats and extra care schemes.

If you smoke...

- ✓ Make sure that you extinguish any cigarettes before you go to bed.
- ✓ Try to smoke outside.
- ✓ Do not throw cigarettes out of window or from a balcony.
- ✓ Never smoke in bed.
- ✓ Do not let children play with matches or lighters - keep them out of reach.
- ✓ Only buy e-cigarettes from a reputable retailer and use official charging units. Never use damaged equipment or batteries.

Rubbish

- ✓ Dumped rubbish is a fire hazard, and an easy target for arsonists.
- ✓ Always use the refuse bins provided on site.
- ✓ Don't overload bins and ensure that the lids are closed.
- ✓ Keep rubbish away from buildings and doors.
- ✓ Rubbish must not be stored on escapes routes - this may prevent or slow your escape.

Shared areas (communal areas of blocks of flats)

We understand that you want the entrance to your home to feel inviting, but we must ensure that no items are stored in corridors, stairwells, and landings. These can act as fuel for fire and obstruct escape routes.

We will check communal areas in blocks of flats on a regular basis. If our teams see any items that present a fire safety risk, we will take steps to remove them. If you see anything within the communal areas that is causing an obstruction or fire risk, contact us on 0114 2900 200 or 0800 1380 380, or email enquiries@syha.co.uk

If you live in an Extra Care Scheme, the manager will explain the fire safety arrangements in your communal areas.

You can also help to keep communal areas safe in other ways.

- ✓ Never wedge open doors.
- ✓ Don't smoke.
- ✓ If you notice any damage to walls, floors, doors, or ceilings, please tell us.
- ✓ Do not attempt to adjust or interfere with any self-closing devices fitted to fire doors.

Fire safety on balconies

Here's how to decrease the risk of a fire developing or spreading on your balcony.

- ✓ Do not use or store barbecues on your balcony
- ✓ Do not use or store gas bottles, lighter fluid or other flammable liquids that could add to a fire on your balcony
- ✓ Never use or store fireworks on your balcony.
- ✓ Reduce clutter and keep items on your balcony to a minimum. Do not use other materials, such as wooden privacy screens, as these can help to spread a fire.
- ✓ If you smoke, make sure that you fully extinguish cigarettes and never flick them over your balcony.
- ✓ If the balcony is a communal walkway, it may be a fire escape route and must be kept clear.

Creating your fire escape plan

- ✓ Talk to your family about how you would get out of your home in the event of a fire, particularly from upstairs rooms. Make sure you consider other ways out of your home if your stairs are filled with smoke.
- ✓ Keep routes that you are using to escape clear of obstructions.
- ✓ Keep door and window keys where everyone can find them.
- ✓ Before you go to bed, close the doors to all rooms in your home. This will help to slow the spread of fire and smoke.
- ✓ If you have a candle burning, always extinguish before you leave the room or go to bed. Use secure candle holders, and never leave them unattended.
- ✓ Emollient skin products are widely available, and used for various skin conditions. They are safe to use, but be aware that they leave a flammable residue on clothing, dressings, and/or bedding.

Fire Door Safety

What is a fire door?

The purpose of a fire door is to prevent the fire from spreading to other parts of the building. Fire doors are inspected as part of South Yorkshire Housing Association's fire risk assessment process to ensure that they are fit for purpose. You can play a vital role in helping to ensure that fire doors within your building remain in a good condition.

Do

Check your flat entrance door every month:

- ✓ Does the door fit correctly and close unaided under its own weight?
- ✓ Does the self-closer operate correctly?
- ✓ Are the handles, hinges and seals in a good state of repair?
- ✓ Has the door or frame been damaged in any way?

Don't

- Ignore problems or faults with your flat entrance door, or any other fire door within the building. Please report these to us as soon as possible.
- Wedge open fire doors within communal areas.
- Change or modify your flat entrance door.
- Paint over or remove the fire and smoke seals that are within the frame of your door.
- Remove or adjust the self-closer.

What to do in the event of a fire

If you live in a house

Get out and call the fire service on 999. Stay out of your home until the fire service say it is safe to return.

What if your escape route is blocked?

If you can't get out, 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'.

If you have a phone with you, call 999 – be ready to describe where you are and the quickest way to reach you.

If live 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.

If you live in a flat or extra care scheme

Follow the fire safety instructions which should be displayed within your building. Your building will operate either a 'stay put' strategy, or an evacuation strategy. If you are instructed to leave the building, please use the nearest exit and close all doors behind you.

If you are unsure what the evacuation strategy is for your building contact SYHA's Health and Safety Team on us 0114 2900 200 or 0800 1380 380 or email HealthandSafety@syha.co.uk

If you live within an extra care scheme, a member of the team will explain the building fire evacuation strategy.

If you are in a communal area and you discover a fire, or the fire alarm sounds, do not return to your flat. – you should leave by the nearest exit.

- Try to remain calm and, if you can, close all doors as you leave.
- Do not use a lift.
- As soon as you are clear of the building call the fire service on 999
Do not re-enter the building until the fire service have said it is safe to do so.

If there is fire or smoke are inside your home and your escape route is not clear

If you can't use your planned escape route safely, you may be safer to stay in your flat until the fire service arrives. Find a room in your flat as far as possible from any fire or smoke, with a window and phone if possible.

Close the door and use soft materials to block any gaps to stop the smoke. Go to a window, shout 'HELP, FIRE' and call 999.

Be ready to describe where you are and the quickest way for firefighters to reach you. Try and stay on the phonenumber, and listen to the advice provided.

What about escape plans for vulnerable people?

If you, or anyone you live with, might find it difficult to escape in an emergency, contact a member of SYHA's Health and Safety Team on 0114 2900 200 or 0800 1380 380 or email HealthandSafety@syha.co.uk who will be happy to visit your home to advise you.

Alternatively, you can contact your local Fire and Rescue.