

# Safety in the Home



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VALE of GLAMORGAN



BRO MORGANNWG

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# Safety in the Home

## Avoid Accidents in the Home

Many of us think that we are at our safest when we are in our own homes. Sadly this is not true. You are more likely to have an accident at home than you are to have one in work or on the road. Children and the elderly are at more risk of having a serious accident which in many cases causes death.

### Children

Children can get themselves into all sorts of scrapes as they grow up. One in ten children will visit a hospital every year following an accident at home. Babies and young children need constant supervision both at home and in unfamiliar surroundings. Their small size inexperience of new situations and curiosity make them more likely than anyone else to have an accident.

### Older people

If you and your household are in the later years of your life your home needs to take this into account. It may be difficult to admit that you are not as nimble on your feet and that your eyesight is not as good as it once was. Elderly people's biggest danger is the risk of falling over which can often lead to stays in hospital. Try to keep your house clutter free, ensure that there are no trailing cables across the floor and check that your rugs and carpets are firmly fixed to avoid slipping.

### Preventing accidents

There is equipment that can be bought to help reduce the chance of accidents (such as cooker guards and curly flexes for kettles) but many accidents can be avoided by just being extra careful in your everyday activities.

- Never leave cords of flexes trailing across the floor or on the edge of units.
- Never let the children play whilst you are ironing, cooking or pouring boiling water.
- Keep razor blades, knives and all medicines out of the reach of children.
- Use medicines only as instructed by your doctor or on the label. Keep them out of reach of children. Remember that children may think that pills are sweets. Unused medicines should be taken back to your chemist.
- Use stepladders not chairs to reach high objects.
- Don't leave first floor windows open where children are. Fit child locks to them if you can.

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- Don't polish under carpets or rugs and make sure that there are no holes to trip over.
- Wipe up spills on lino immediately
- Use a non-slip mat in and beside the bath.
- Always run cold water into the bath before hot to prevent scalds.
- Never leave a young child in a bath unattended even for a few seconds.
- Make sure stair carpets are firmly fixed.
- Keep all household and garden chemicals in a locked cupboard.
- Check children's toys to ensure no sharp points or loose parts. Only buy toys marked with a British Standards Safety Mark.
- Don't attempt DIY tasks in the home unless you know what you are doing and the equipment is in good condition. Use a RCD (Residual Current Device) when using garden and DIY electrical tools.

However careful you are accidents will happen. Have you thought about learning first aid? The local Red Cross and St Johns Ambulance will be able to tell you of courses in your area.

## ● Fire

### Smoke Alarms

Smoke alarms are being installed by the Council throughout their Housing Stock.

- The Alarms operate from mains electricity. You will be given an instruction booklet, and shown how to operate the alarms when they are installed.
- It is your responsibility to carry out a weekly test to check that the alarms operate and report any defects to the Repairs Department.
- If you have installed your own battery operated smoke alarms the Council recommend that you check the operation weekly and change the battery as required by the supplier.

### Solid fuel fires and room heaters

- Do not draw a fire with newspaper; do not use any flammable substances to start it. (other than solid fire lighters manufactured for that purpose)
- Sweep your chimney at least twice a year.
- For enclosed heaters, brush smoke outlets every month.
- Burn only recommended fuels.  
Ensure adequate ventilation, do not block ventilation openings.

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## Do and Don'ts

- Do a nightly check before you go to bed. Make sure that all the door and windows are closed. Make sure irons, heaters and the cooker are turned off. If you smoke, check that ashtrays do not have a cigarette still burning. Unplug all electrical appliances.
- If you lock your doors and windows from the inside always ensure that the keys are kept nearby so that you can open them quickly in an emergency.
- Do check flexes regularly. Never use damaged ones and do not run them under carpets.
- Do read and follow the manufacturers instructions on electric blankets. Have them serviced every two or three years.
- Do have electrical appliances serviced in accordance with manufacturers instructions and only buy appliances that carry a British Standards Safety Mark (the kitemark).
- Do keep an appropriate blanket or fire extinguisher in an easily accessible place in the kitchen.
- Do plan escape routes for you and your family now, even if you never need to use them.
- Don't leave radiant heaters unguarded or where they can be knocked over.
- Don't air cloths over or around any heaters of any sort.
- Don't leave fat pans unattended, even for a minute.
- Don't smoke in bed or in an armchair if you feel drowsy
- Don't let children have access to matches or lighters.
- Don't allow children near fat pans.
- Don't wedge open fire door in communal areas. They are there to protect you and your family.
- Don't obstruct passageways in communal areas or in your house. They may block your escape.
- Don't leave refuse sacks anywhere other than in your dustbin or paladin. A carelessly discarded match or match may set them alight and trap you in your home.
- Don't overload multipoint adapters. Make sure all plugs are wired correctly and fitted with the correct fuse for the appliance.

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## Do and Don'ts continued

- Faulty electrical goods can also be dangerous causing fires and electric shocks. A local charity TRACK 2000 can arrange for items such as refrigerators and washing machines to be repaired at a low cost for people in need. They can be contacted by phoning 029 20489441/486600.
- Don't lock or bolt bedroom doors, especially from the outside.

## Major fires – What to do

- If you can close the door to the bedroom where the fire is. This will stop it spreading and contain smoke.
- If you suspect that there is a fire in a room and the door is closed then do not open it. Feel the door (not the handle). If it is warm then there is fire on the other side.
- Get everyone out immediately – you may have as little as 2 or 3 minutes, before the heat and smoke overtake you.
- Close any doors behind you
- Telephone the fire brigade by calling 999 and give your exact address.

## If trapped in a fire

If you are unable to get out of a building that is on fire try to get to a room that faces the street. Close the door and try to stop the gap with a rug blanket or whatever else is to hand. Shout for help from the window but do not jump from it unless it proves necessary. There will be less smoke nearer the floor so keep low.

## Other Booklets:

- 1 Welcome to your New Home
- 2 Rights & Responsibilities
- 3 Rent
- 4 Housing for Older or Disabled People
- 5 Moving Home
- 6 Repairs & Maintenance
- 7 Safety in the Home