

# Fire safety information

for L&Q residents



L&Q



# Fire safety advice for residents

We take the safety of our residents seriously but fire safety is everyone's responsibility. Whether you live in a converted house or purpose-built block of flats, it is important to be aware of fire safety.

This booklet will inform you about good practices you can adopt to keep everyone in your home and building safe. There are many simple measures you can take to help prevent a fire in your home. Most of them cost nothing and following this advice can keep you and your family safe. The most common causes of domestic fires as reported by Fire and Rescue Services (fire brigade) are: cooking, smoking, faulty or misused electrics and electrical equipment, candles and open flames.

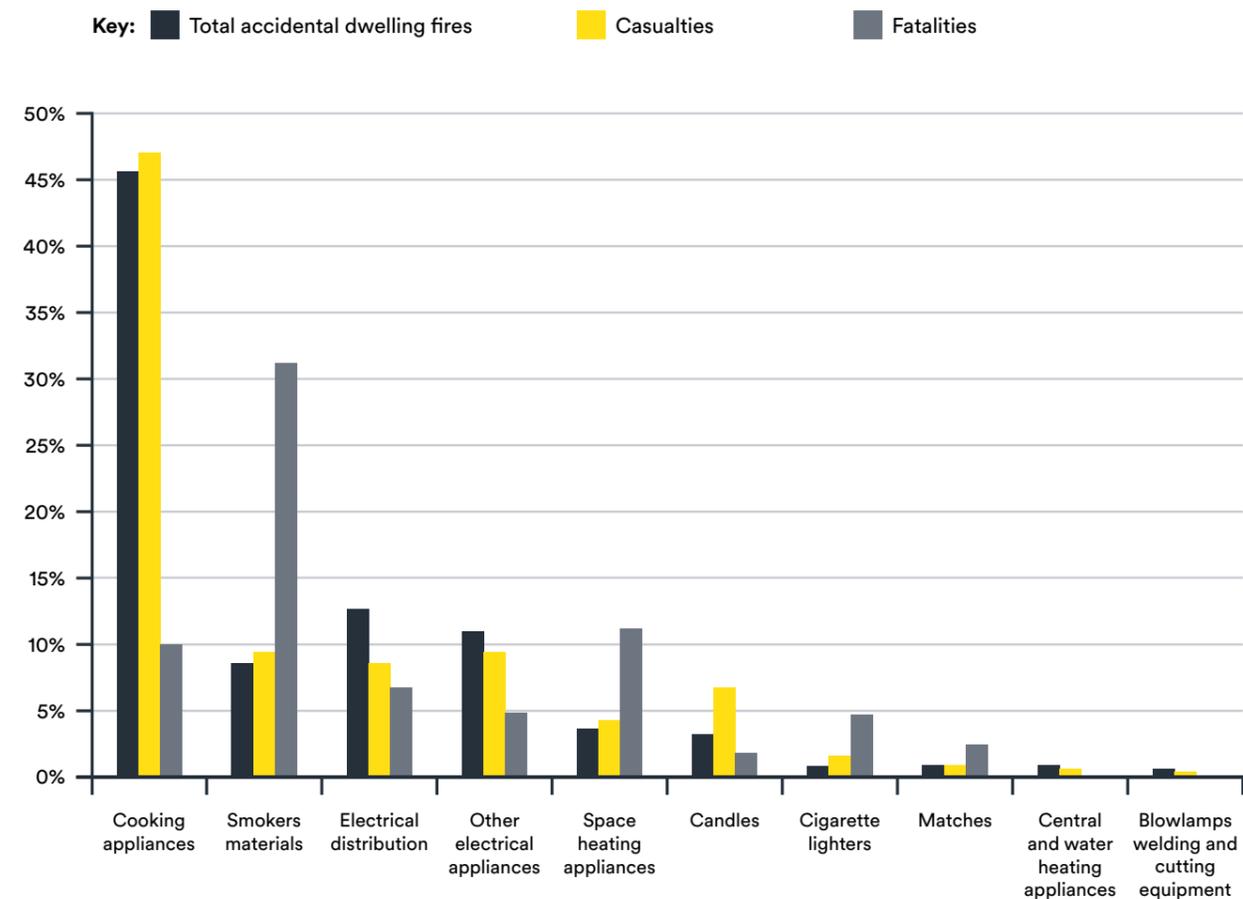
In this booklet you will find advice on how to safely manage these activities. Please read and share this with members of your household.

**Have you seen the video on how accidental fires can start in your home**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T7eXffunDXU>

## Key Facts: Recent fire statistics (April 2020 - March 2021)

Percentage of fires, non-fatal casualties, and fire-related fatalities in accidental dwelling fires by selected sources of ignition, England; year ending March 2021



In 2020/21, 24,293 accidental dwelling fires were attended by Fire and Rescue Services in England. In the same period, there were 240 fire-related fatalities, comprising of 156 male, 80 female and four recorded as unknown. Of the 240 fire related fatalities, **78% (186)** of these were in dwelling fires.

**Cooking appliances** were the largest ignition source for accidental dwelling fires, accounting for **46%** of these fires and **10%** of the fire-related fatalities.

Smokers' materials were the source of ignition in **8%** of accidental dwelling fires, this was the largest ignition category for fire-related fatalities in accidental dwelling fires, accounting for **32%**.

**'Misuse of equipment or appliances'** accounted for **34%** of dwelling fires.

**Food** was the material mainly responsible for the development of the fire in **18%** of all dwelling fires and the item first ignited in **26%** of all dwelling fires in the financial year 2020 to 2021. However, it was the material mainly responsible for the development of the fire in only **4%** of all fire-related fatalities in dwelling fires.

Statistics indicate men have a greater likelihood of dying in a fire than women: the overall fatality rate per million population for males in year ending March 2021 was 5.6 per million while the rate for females was 2.8 per million.

The most common cause of death for fire-related fatalities in the financial year 2020 to 2021 (where the cause of death was known) was **"overcome by gas or smoke"**, recorded for **33% (78)** of fire-related fatalities. This was followed by **"burns"** (**30%**; 73 fire-related fatalities) and **"unspecified"** (**16%**; 39 fire-related fatalities).

Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/detailed-analysis-of-fires-attended-by-fire-and-rescue-services-england-april-2020-to-march-2021/detailed-analysis-of-fires-attended-by-fire-and-rescue-services-england-april-2020-to-march-2021>

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Cooking appliances were the largest ignition source for accidental dwelling fires accounting for **46%** of these fires

**18%**  
18% of all dwelling fires had food as the material mainly responsible for the development of the fire

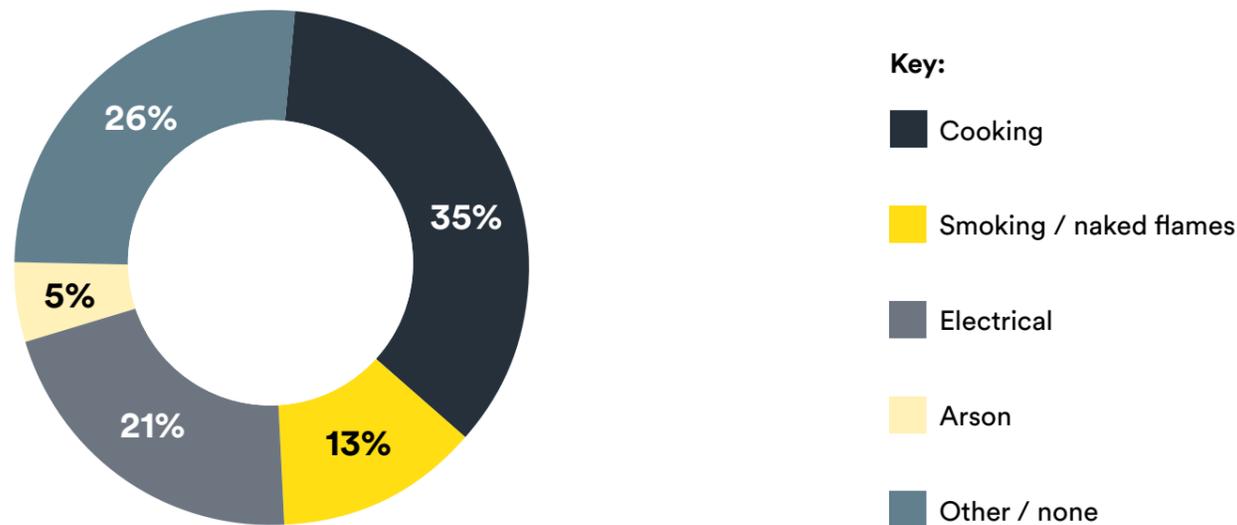
# Fire safety advice for residents

## L&Q fire statistics

Below is a breakdown of fire incidents reported by category for the previous two years.

Ignition source	No of incidents reported	
	April 2020 – March 2021 (Quarter 1-4)	April 2021 – March 2022 (Quarter 1-4)
Cooking	23	35
Smoking/naked flame	10	10
Electrical	14	14
Arson	14	7
Other/none	13	30
<b>Period total</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>96</b>

L&Q reported fire incidents April 2021 - March 2022.



\*Other/none refers to incidents where the source of ignition is unknown or does not fall into the main categories.

## Fire safety in your home: Top tips for keeping you and your family safe



### Plugs

Turn off appliance plugs when not in use



### Doors

Do not leave a fire door open and never disconnect an automatic closer



### Appliances

Do not leave appliances running when no one is home



### Smoking

Do not smoke in bed and always put out cigarettes fully



### Smoke Alarms

Test you smoke alarm weekly and do not cover or remove



### BBQ

If you have a balcony, do not have a BBQ on it



### Cooking

Do not leave cooking unattended



### Belongings

A tidy home with fewer belongings can reduce the risk of a fire spreading



### Candles

Do not leave candles unattended and always put out fully



### Matches

Store matches and lighters in safe place away from children



### Electrical

Do not overload electrical sockets and switch them off when not in use



### Flammable

Do not store anything flammable such as petrol in your home



# Top causes of fire in homes

## Cooking

More fires and fire injuries are caused by accidental activities in the kitchen than anywhere else in the home. Heat alarms fitted in kitchens can detect the increase in temperature caused by a fire but will not be set off by cooking fumes.

### Real life story

A fire incident was recently reported in an L&Q flat in a residential block. The resident was cooking on a gas hob and had cardboard boxes on the worktop very close to the hob. The flame from the burner transferred heat to the cardboard boxes and eventually set it alight. The resident had left her cooking on the hob unattended.

The heat detector installed in the kitchen alerted the resident, but the fire had spread quickly using other items on the worktop as fuel. The resident evacuated, alerted her neighbours, and called the Fire and Rescue Service (fire brigade) who attended to put out the fire. There was extensive damage to parts of the kitchen. The resident was advised to always keep the hob area clear and not leave cooking unattended.

### Always take extra care in the kitchen, when cooking please remember

- Never leave pans unattended
- Don't cook if you are tired, have been drinking alcohol or taking medication that might make you drowsy
- Keep the oven, hob, cooker hood, and grill clean and in good working order. A build-up of fat and grease can ignite and cause a fire
- Check toasters are clean and not placed under kitchen cabinets or close to anything that can catch fire. Regularly clear the crumb tray. Only use a toaster for its intended use. Do not use on its side as a toastie sandwich maker
- Always supervise children (and pets) in the kitchen. Put matches away and keep saucepan handles out of their reach
- Take care if you're wearing loose clothing as they can easily catch fire
- Keep tea towels and cloths away from the cooker and hob
- Spark devices are safer than matches or lighters to light gas cookers because they don't have a naked flame
- Double check the cooker is off when you've finished cooking.

### If a pan catches fire

- Don't tackle the fire yourself
- Do not try to move the pan
- Never throw water onto the pan as this can create a fireball
- Turn off the heat but only if you can do so safely
- Leave the room and close the door
- Shout to warn others and call 999.

### Deep fat frying

- Take extra care when cooking with hot oil as it can easily overheat and catch fire
- Never fill a pan more than one third full of fat or oil
- Make sure food is dry before putting in hot oil
- If the oil starts to smoke, it's too hot. Turn off the heat and leave it to cool
- Use an electronic deep fat fryer if possible as they have automatic temperature controls.

### BBQ's

- Never use a barbecue (BBQ) indoors or on a balcony
- Position your BBQ on level ground and keep it well away from anything that may catch fire (external wall of your building, sheds, fences, trees, tents etc.)
- Never use petrol, paraffin, or biofuel to get the BBQ going or revive it
- Never take a BBQ into a tent, awning, caravan, or motorhome. Even when cooling it will give off poisonous carbon monoxide fumes which can kill.

# Top causes of fire in homes (continued)

## Candles and naked flames

Fire and Rescue Services (fire brigade) regularly attend fires caused by candles, incense, and oil burners. Although they create a gorgeous warm glow, candles need handling with care. In 2020, the London Fire Brigade reported over 200 fires in London were connected to candle use.

We advise you to swap your wax candles for 'flameless' candles, also known as LED candles. They are either battery operated or powered by electricity so are much safer.

### Real life story

An incident was reported in an L&Q premises, a residential block of flats, where the resident lit tea lights around the bathtub while having a soak in the bath. The resident left the tea lights unattended and they transferred heat to the UPVC bath surroundings which began to melt and caught alight. There was extensive damage to the bath and wall panels and the Fire and Rescue Service attended to put out the fire.

### For your safety and that of others, please make sure:

- You put out any candles, incense, and oil burners when you leave the room and especially before going to bed
- These items are always to be held firmly in heat resistant holders and placed on a stable surface
- You keep them away from materials that may catch fire such as curtains, furniture, clothes
- Tea lights are in the right holders as they can get very hot and can melt through plastic surfaces like a TV or bath
- You keep candles and other naked flames out of reach of children and pets to avoid accidents.



## Fireworks

- Never use fireworks on balconies
- Never throw fireworks or put them in your pocket
- Don't drink alcohol if you're setting off fireworks
- Store fireworks in a closed box and take them out one at a time
- Keep a bucket of water nearby
- Follow the instructions on each firework. Use a torch to read them and never a naked flame
- Light fireworks at arm's length, using the taper provided
- Make sure everyone stands well back
- Always supervise children around fireworks and never give sparklers to a child under five
- Light sparklers one at a time and wear gloves
- Keep pets indoors
- Take care around open flames such as bonfires and barbecues – even clothes labelled 'low flammability' can catch fire
- Keep bonfires away from things that may catch fire
- Only buy fireworks marked BS 7114 (the British Standard for the safety of fireworks) or the CE marking (showing they conform to European safety standards).

## Fairy lights

- Check fairy lights are in good working order and replace any bulbs that blow
- Check plugs and wiring and buy from reputable outlets with a CE marking
- Avoid buying second hand unless it comes with an electrical certificate
- Consider buying LED lights which are a better option as they do not get hot
- Make sure the fuse in the plug is the right size (check the box for advice)
- Make sure they are suitable for external use if relevant.

## Celebrate safely

- During festive seasons, celebrate safely. Take extra care when celebrating events such as Halloween, Bonfire Night, Diwali and Christmas. Fancy dress costumes and decorations can easily catch fire so make sure they are kept away from naked flames
- Always check that costumes or face masks are fire retardant in accordance with the European standard EN71-2.

# Top causes of fire in homes (continued)

**“If you’re a smoker it’s absolutely vital you ensure you adopt safe smoking practices “If you don’t, you risk causing a fire which could not only destroy your home, but seriously damage your health.”**

## Smoking

The fires caused by smoking (including cigarettes, roll-ups, cigars, and pipe tobacco) result in more deaths than any other type of fire.

If you are considering quitting smoking, the link below gives more information on how to do this.  
<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/quit-smoking/nhs-stop-smoking-services-help-you-quit/>

### Real life story

The FRS (fire brigade) recently reported they attended a fire incident in a residential building which damaged part of a ground floor flat.

The fire is believed to have been caused by unsafe smoking practice. The resident fell asleep while smoking on a sofa and the lit cigarette fell in between the cushions and set it alight. The resident was alerted by the heat and was able to safely evacuate but did suffer minor burns to the arm and thigh.

“If you’re a smoker it’s absolutely vital you ensure you adopt safe smoking practices highlighted in the section below. If you don’t, you risk causing a fire which could not only destroy your home, but seriously damage your health.”

## How to prevent smoke related fires

- It is safer to smoke outside but make sure cigarettes are extinguished and disposed of safely, particularly if smoking on balconies
- Never smoke in bed
- Don’t smoke in an armchair or sofa if you think you may fall asleep
- Take extra care when you’re tired, taking prescription drugs or if you’ve been drinking alcohol
- Use ashtrays that can’t tip over and stub cigarettes out safely
- Never balance cigars or cigarettes on the edge of an ashtray or anything else as they can fall and cause a fire
- Don’t leave lit pipes or cigarettes unattended
- Empty ashtrays carefully

- Make sure smoking materials are safely put out, cold, and preferably wet them before throwing into an indoor bin
- Don’t smoke counterfeit cigarettes as they can cause fires due to the way they are made
- Keep matches and lighters out of children’s reach and buy child-resistant lighters.

## Electronic cigarettes

Use of electronic cigarettes has increased in recent years. They are safer to use if the manufacturers’ instructions are followed. Use only the battery and charger that’s provided with the e-cigarette.

### Real life story

There was a fatal fire reported by the FRS in a nursing home, where e-cigarettes were found to have contributed. Not only do e-cigarettes have a charging pack which can overheat, they also use a heating element to vaporize the liquid content prior to inhalation. This element is an ignition source and will pose a risk near to oxygen supply.

## We advise that

- E-cigarettes must be treated similarly to standard cigarettes when users are on medical oxygen or in a potentially oxygen-enriched environment. Never use e-cigarettes close to medical oxygen
- E-cigarettes must not be left unattended while on charge and never overnight when householders are asleep
- Products should be purchased from reputable sources
- Carers should highlight the fire risks of e-cigarettes to vulnerable clients or patients
- Never use a damaged e-cigarette.



# Top causes of fire in homes (continued)

Turn off  
electrical  
equipment  
when not  
in use

## Electric heaters and equipment

It is common for households to use heaters to dry clothes, particularly in the winter months but this poses a significant risk. Portable electric heaters are high-wattage appliances that have the potential to ignite nearby combustible materials like curtains, beds, sofas, paper, clothing, and flammable liquids.

### Real life story

The FRS (fire brigade) attended a fire incident in a house where a portable electric heater was the source of ignition. The heater was placed very close to the curtains which were made of a highly flammable material.

The residents were in the lounge while the heater was left on in the bedroom. They were alerted when the smoke detector in the hallway was set off and were lucky to get out safely.

## When using heaters and electrical devices in your home please remember

- To sit at least one metre away from any heaters
- Never put a heater near curtains, furniture, or clothes. Keep heaters at least 1 meter away from flammables
- Do not cover the heater vents
- Do not overload sockets. Always check that you're using the right fuse, typical examples include:
  - 3A fuse – Table lamp, television, computer, blender, fridge, freezer
  - 13A fuse – Washing machine, dishwasher, microwave, kettle, toaster, iron
- If you must use an adaptor, use a fused 'in line' type but don't overload it by adding extra plug-in adaptors or using high current appliances such as electric heaters. Make sure you know the limits
- Cable drum extension leads must be completely unwound to avoid overheating
- Only use **CE** marked or **UKCA** electrical marked products
- It is good practice to register electrical appliances/equipment with manufacturers so you can be contacted in case of a product recall
- Turn off electrical equipment when not in use.

## Extension Leads

An extension lead should not be used whenever it is possible to reach a wall socket with the equipment cable. However, the equipment cable should never be stretched taut as this may cause a tripping hazard.

## Where the use of an extension lead is unavoidable, only use one:

- Which was bought ready assembled
- Fitted with suitably insulated connectors and plugs
- Positioned carefully to prevent any risk of damage to the cable.

If the cable must cross a pathway, the risk of tripping and damage can be minimized by covering it with a rubber protector strip.

## Always check that:

- Leads, plugs and sockets are undamaged
- Lead plug contains a correctly rated fuse for the equipment to be used
- When a cable drum extension lead is in use, the cable must be completely unwound from the drum to avoid the cable overheating.

## Electrical appliances

- Keep electrical appliances clean and in good working order
- Keep electrics (leads and appliances) away from water
- Do not leave appliances such as washing machines, dishwashers and tumble dryers running overnight
- Empty fluff regularly from tumble dryers in line with the manufacturer's instructions
- Hair straighteners get extremely hot. Always switch them off and leave them to cool on a heatproof surface
- Keep to one plug per socket. High powered appliances such as washing machines, should have a single socket to themselves
- Blown fuses – replace like for like. If they keep blowing don't put a higher rated fuse in as its probably that the device is defective
- Avoid purchasing second hand electrical equipment unless it's PAT tested with certificate.

## Using an electric blanket

- Store electric blankets flat, rolled up or loosely folded to prevent damaging the internal wiring
- Unplug blankets before you get into bed unless it has a thermostat control for safe all-night use
- Try not to buy second-hand blankets and check regularly for wear and tear
- Always follow the manufacturer's instructions
- There are no legal requirements to replace fire blankets within a given timeframe. The general rule is to replace fire blankets in line with the manufacturer's guidelines. This is commonly between five and seven years from date of purchase.

# Top causes of fire in homes (continued)

## Battery and charging safely

Re-chargeable/lithium-ion batteries when used safely power millions of devices every day such as mobile phones, laptops, tablets, mobility scooters, electric scooters, and bikes. However, batteries can present a fire risk when over-charged, short-circuited, submerged in water or if their cases are damaged.

### Real life story

The FRS (fire brigade) attended an incident in a residential block of flats where fire engulfed part of a fourth floor flat. The main ignition source was reported as a mobile phone which had been overcharged causing the battery to expand and explode. It was also reported the phone charger was likely to be of an inferior quality.

## Please follow these safety tips when charging your devices:

- Always use the charger that came with your phone, tablet, e-cigarette or mobile device or a genuine replacement. Counterfeit electrical chargers can be deadly, and many fail to meet UK safety regulations leading to fires and injury
- Don't leave items continuously on charge (after the charge cycle is complete)
- Avoid storing, using, or charging batteries in extremes of high or low temperatures
- Protect batteries against being damaged, crushed or punctured and don't immerse in water
- Do not cover devices in use, or batteries that are on charge, in case of overheating
- Do not charge batteries or electrical equipment overnight.

## Furniture

Always ensure that your furniture has the fire-resistant permanent label (see right).



## Product recalls

Faulty electrical goods can cause fires. If you are concerned about the safety of a product, stop using it and make your concern known to the retailer, manufacturer, or your local Trading Standards office.

A list of recalled products is available through the LFB website:  
[www.london-fire.gov.uk/product-recalls.asp](http://www.london-fire.gov.uk/product-recalls.asp)

- Take extra care with second-hand appliances. Make sure they have been safety checked and are not listed on the product recall register
- Always ensure new appliances are registered so that manufacturers can contact you in the event of any problems. Go to: [www.registermyappliance.org.uk](http://www.registermyappliance.org.uk) for more information and to register your electrical products.



# Keeping safe / Your responsibilities

## Alarms

It's better to prevent a fire from happening, but fitting alarms will provide an early warning in the event of a fire and allow vital extra time to escape.

If you own part or all your home, you will be responsible for installing and maintaining your smoke and heat alarms. Smoke and heat alarms are easy to install. They are available from most DIY and high street supermarkets.

Most of our properties have mains wired smoke and heat alarms. If you have a battery-operated alarm, we will upgrade this when you have your five yearly Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR).

### Please make sure you:

- Fit at least one smoke alarm on every level of your home and in any room where a fire could start. Examples of rooms at risk of fire are where electrical equipment is left switched on or on charge, people smoke, candles, incense sticks or naked flames are kept and portable heaters are used
- Keep smoke alarms away from kitchens or bathrooms as steam can set them off by mistake
- Fit a heat alarm in the kitchen. This will detect the increase in temperature caused by a fire but will not be set off by cooking fumes
- Choose smoke alarms with a 10 year or long-lasting sealed battery
- Always follow the manufacturers fitting instructions. Poorly sited alarms may cause lots of false alarms.

**Make sure any alarms you buy meets British Standards and are marked with the kitemark logo or European (CE) safety mark.**



European conformance CE mark



"China Export" CE mark



### Making sure alarms work:

Fitting alarms save lives, but only if they are working so test yours regularly. It's as simple as pushing the button on the face of the alarm. Where alarms are fitted on a high ceiling, you can utilise a mop/broom handle to push the test button

### Please take note of the following:

- Change the battery if it starts to bleep on a regular basis
- Never disconnect or take the batteries out of your alarms if they go off by mistake
- Some alarms are fitted with 10 year or long-lasting sealed batteries. These should not be removed or replaced as doing so will damage the alarms beyond repair
- Make testing your smoke alarms part of your regular household routine, ideally you should test them weekly
- Test your alarm by pressing the test button on the face of the alarm until the alarm sounds. If it doesn't sound, you may need to replace the battery
- If you are a tenant and have a faulty alarm, please report it immediately to report-a-repair on **0300 456 9996**.



# Keeping safe / Your responsibilities



## Specialist alarms

Where a person has any conditions that may prevent or delay their escape, specialist alarms can be fitted.

- Strobe light and vibrating pad alarms are available for those who are deaf or hard of hearing. For more information contact: Royal National Institute for Deaf people (RNID) information line on **0808 808 0123** or text phone **0780 000 0360** or your local Fire and Rescue Service.
- Where a telecare monitoring system is fitted, this should be linked to all alarms and sensors in the property
- Wherever possible, fit interlinked alarms throughout your property so that when one alarm detects a fire they all go off together. This will give everyone in your home the earliest warning of fire
- Mains powered alarms, should be installed by a qualified electrician.

## Carbon Monoxide / gas safety

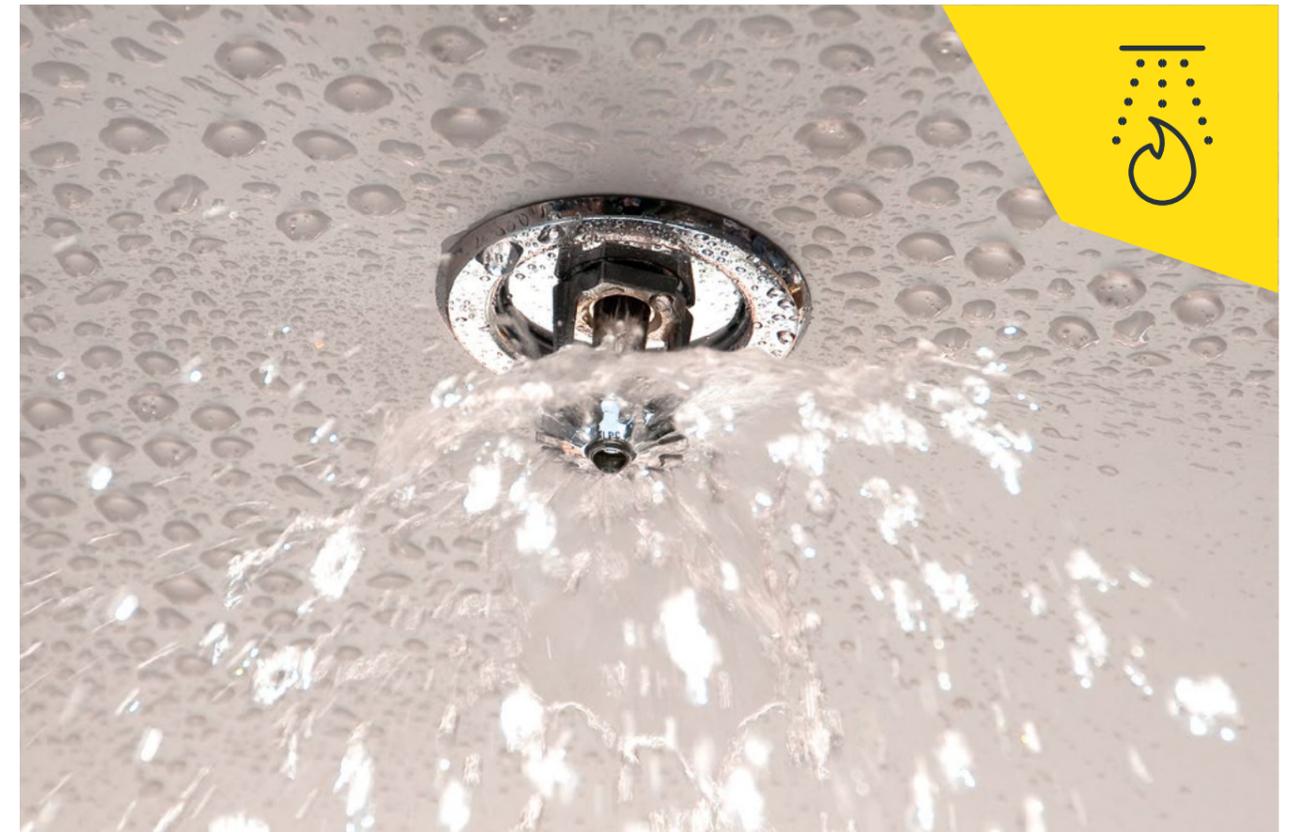
Carbon Monoxide (CO) is a poisonous gas that has no smell or taste and is produced by the incomplete burning of fossil fuels. This can happen when gas appliances, heaters or solid fuel burners have been incorrectly fitted or poorly maintained and if flues or chimneys are blocked CO can kill quickly and without warning whether you are awake or sleeping. A slow build-up of CO over a long period of time can also be deadly or lead to long term health issues.

### What you can do:

- Fit CO alarms in all rooms where there is a solid fuel burning appliance e.g. gas cooker, fire or boiler, a solid fuel burner or open fire
- Get all fuel burning appliances serviced regularly by a registered competent person
- Most CO alarms are portable so take yours with you when going on holiday or visiting family and friends
- Avoid purchasing second-hand cookers. When ignited, your gas cooker should have a steady blue flame; a yellow or red flame can indicate incomplete combustion and the production of CO. You should not use until certified safe by a Gas Safe engineer
- Always use Gas Safe gas engineers to install gas appliances; you can use the following link to find a Gas Safe engineer within your area: [www.gassaferegister.co.uk](http://www.gassaferegister.co.uk)

## Disposal of smoke alarms

Smoke alarms fall under the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Regulations. When the time comes to dispose of your alarm, you should take it to your local civic amenity site (rubbish or re-cycling centre) and place it in the section for WEEE which should be clearly marked.



## Sprinkler Systems

A sprinkler system is an active firefighting equipment installed in buildings and designed to fight fires. Where provided, L&Q will service sprinklers annually by a competent person in accordance with BS 9251 which will include a visual inspection of all sprinkler heads.

### If you have a sprinkler system installed in your home, please ensure the following:

- Provide access to L&Q staff/contractors when requested for inspection of sprinkler system.
- Ensure the equipment within your dwelling is accessible i.e., pipework within cupboards etc.
- Do not tamper with sprinkler systems within your dwelling or the communal parts of your building. This includes but not limited to painting, covering up or blocking off sprinkler heads, connecting any equipment to the pipe work, tampering with valves etc.
- If you have any problems with your sprinkler system, please report it to report-a-repair on **0300 456 9996**.

# Bedtime checks



Shut all internal doors when going to bed. A closed door can help to stop flames and smoke from spreading to other rooms giving you and your family more time to escape



Turn off and unplug electrical appliances unless they are designed to be left on – like your fridge or freezer



Don't leave the washing machine, tumble dryer or dishwasher switched on



Don't leave mobile phones, tablets or e-cigarettes charging overnight



Check your cooker is turned off. Turn heaters off, rake out fires and put a fire guard in place (if applicable)



Put candles, incense sticks and oil burners out and never leave them burning when you are asleep



Make sure cigarettes are completely out. It's best to wet them to be sure. Never smoke in bed



Escape routes should be kept clear of anything that may slow down your escape



Keep door and window keys where everyone you live with can find them



If you or anyone else in the home has mobility issues, make sure mobility aids and methods of calling for help are close to hand (e.g., link line pendants) in case they are needed to help with an escape.



# What to look out for and how to report it

We depend on you to be our eyes and ears, please and report any issues of concern via report-a-repair on **0300 456 9996** or to your housing officer/supported housing officer.

## Examples of issues that should be promptly reported are

### Within your home

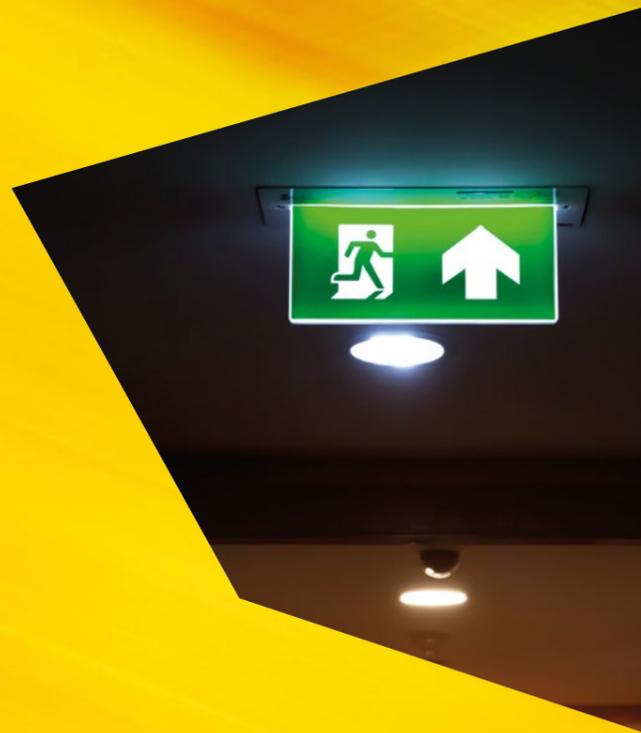
- Damaged fire doors, flat entrance doors or internal fire doors (if applicable). This could be broken glazing, defective or broken self-closers, broken letter plates, damages to the door leaf, defective or missing strips and seals
- Faulty smoke, heat or CO detectors (if applicable) if you are a tenant, for example intermittent beeping of detectors etc
- Faulty electrics like damaged sockets, light fittings, frequent tripping of the circuit breaker.

In addition the the above, where resident's health has deteriorated such as inability to self evacuate, use of health equipment (oxygen) etc.

### In communal areas

- Damaged fire doors either communal or flat entrance doors. This could be broken glazing, defective or broken self-closers, damages to the door leaf, broken letter plates, defective or missing strips and seals
- Faulty alarms or detectors (if applicable) like faults on panels, intermittent beeping on panel or detectors etc
- Combustible storage/ignition sources in communal areas or storage blocking escape routes, such as mobility scooters, bicycles, push bikes, prams etc
- Smoking or use of naked flames in communal areas
- Faulty electrics like damaged sockets or light fittings
- Damaged or unlocked service riser or plant room doors
- Faulty smoke control systems in communal areas, like open shaft doors or faults on panels etc
- Loose or missing signage such as the fire exit and no smoking signs
- Signs of antisocial behaviour or vandalism
- Inappropriate disposal of items in communal areas and around bin or refuse areas.

# Escape



## Escape



### Evacuation strategies

There are different types of evacuation strategies as explained below:

- **Stay put** this refers to a situation where if a fire occurs within a flat, the occupants alert others in the flat, make their way out of the building and summon the fire brigade. If a fire starts in the common parts, anyone in these areas makes their way out and summons the fire brigade.

All other residents not directly affected by the fire would be expected to “stay put” and remain in their flat unless directed to leave by the fire brigade. This means your building has been designed and built to protect you from the effects of a fire in other areas of the building for a specified period of time.

Most purpose-built block of flats have a stay put strategy except where a risk has been identified which necessitated a temporary change to the evacuation strategy until the risk is mitigated or eliminated.

- **Simultaneous Evacuation:** this involves evacuating the residents of several flats together irrespective of the location of the fire. It requires a means to alert all these residents to the need to evacuate, i.e., a fire detection and alarm system.

In sheltered and other supported living accommodation with communal facilities such as a lounge, kitchen, staff offices etc. There is a mixed evacuation strategy i.e., Stay put within individual dwellings and simultaneous evacuation in the communal areas. This will be clearly stated on the Fire Action Notices displayed on the premises.

### Progressive evacuation

This is the evacuation of the occupants, initially to a place of relative safety within the building where they can remain or, if necessary, complete the evacuation to ultimate safety as part of a managed system.

There are two categories of progressive evacuation:

- **Progressive horizontal evacuation**  
The process of evacuating people into an adjoining fire compartment on the same level, from which they can later evacuate to a place of ultimate safety.
- **Zoned evacuation**  
A zoned evacuation is achieved by moving the occupants away from the affected zone to an adjacent zone while the fire-affected zone was brought under control.

Progressive evacuation is commonly employed where:

- The occupants may need assistance to evacuate further (e.g. mobility-impaired people who may not be able to use stairs)
- It is desirable or necessary for the building occupants not to leave the building entirely (e.g. detained people or hospital patients)
- A significant operational loss would be incurred by the total and immediate evacuation of a large building for a small fire (e.g. large shopping centre).



Example of a Fire Action Notice for a block with a Stay Put evacuation strategy

## Fire Action Notices

Fire Action Notices are signs designed to tell building occupants what to do in the event of a fire. They give various instructions including how to raise the alarm, where the closest assembly point is and how to contact the Fire and Rescue Service (fire brigade). It is recommended that Fire Action Notices are placed at prominent locations in a building.

### In properties with communal areas:

- A fire action notice (applicable to the evacuation strategy of the building) will be displayed at each entry and exit as a minimum
- In high rise and complex blocks, an additional sign should be provided on each level preferably.

## What is your responsibility?

L&Q has a responsibility under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO) to ensure that our properties and residents are safe.

Residents irrespective of tenure also have certain responsibilities one of which is to ensure your flat entrance door is not deliberately damaged and is functioning correctly and effectively.

If you are a tenant, you are expected to report any damage/defect to your flat entrance door as soon as possible to report -a-repair on **0300 456 9996**.

If you own part or all your home, you may be responsible for any repairs/replacement needed to your flat entrance door. All communal Fire Doors is the responsibility of L&Q and damages should also be reported to report-a-repair on **0300 456 9996** as soon as possible.

## How to check your flat entrance door (if it is a fire door)

Fire doors should be checked regularly, and the more they're used the more frequently they should be checked.

To check your fire door is functioning properly, you can carry out the following visual checks:

1. Check that the door is closing 'to latch' automatically: Open the door halfway and let it go – it should close to latch. Sometimes the door closer will require adjusting to ensure that this happens.
2. Ensure that the smoke seals are in place and undamaged. Over time these can become worn or even overpainted.
3. Check that there are no penetrations or damage to the door.
4. Check that the 3 hinges are secure and in good condition.
5. Check the gaps between the door and frame – there should be less than 4mm at the top and sides, and a maximum of 8mm at the bottom of the door.

### Important tips for residents:

- Don't wedge a fire door open.
- Ensure the self-closing device to your front door shuts the door fully.
- Seen a defective fire door? Report it to report -a-repair on **0300 456 9996** immediately. If the door is within your dwelling and you own part or all your flat, you may be responsible for the necessary repairs.

## Fire doors

### Why is a Fire Door Important?

A fire door is an important safety device in the event of a fire. Fire doors delay the spread of smoke and fire, which can give the occupants of a property crucial time to get to safety should a fire break out and minimise damage to the building by containing smoke and fire for a specified period. Fire doors will not fulfil this function if damaged or propped open.

### Where will I find a fire door?

Depending on the type of building you live in, fire doors can be found in the communal areas and in individual dwellings. If you live in a block of flats or converted house, your flat entrance door invariably should be a Fire Door, this protects the common areas from spread of flame and smoke. Other locations will depend on a risk assessment and fire strategy of the building.

### How to identify a fire door

Except for flat entrance doors (which must have a self-closer particularly if it opens to a communal area) most fire doors will have a sign that indicates it is a fire door such as a blue 'Fire Door' or 'Keep Closed' sign. Other components like door closers, intumescent or smoke seals around the edge of the door or the frame would also indicate it is a fire door.

# Escape (continued)



## Making an escape plan

- The best route is the normal way in and out of your home
- Wherever possible or available, plan a second route in case the first one is blocked
- Take a few minutes to practice it regularly
- Make sure everyone in your home, including visitors who spend the night, are aware of the escape plan
- Keep door and window keys where everyone you live with can find them
- Make sure security gates can be easily opened from the inside without complicated or several locks. **Please note:** If you have security gates/grilles fitted, in the event of a fire, these will increase the time that it takes for you to escape or for the fire service to enter your home, which could prove fatal. We strongly recommend that you remove all security gates and grilles for your own safety. If you are concerned about the security of your home, please contact your housing officer to discuss alternative security measures
- If anyone in the home is slow to react or has mobility issues, adapt the plan to suit their needs
- Mobility aids and any methods of calling for help should always be kept close to hand (e.g. mobile phone/link alarm or pendant)
- Make sure the way in and out of your home is kept clear of anything that may slow down or block your escape. This includes white goods such as freezers
- Review your plan if your circumstances change. If you need support or advice with this, contact your local Fire and Rescue Service
- If you have mobility issues and live in a flat, let your housing officer/supported housing officer know and they may carry out a person-centred risk assessment if applicable.

## What to do if there is a fire in your home

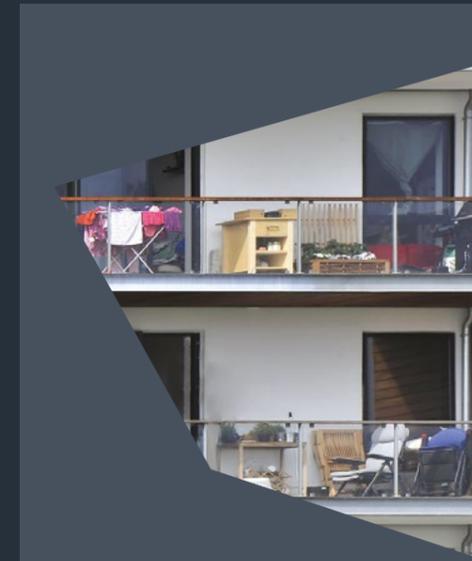
- If any of your smoke alarms go off, never assume it is a false alarm
- Shout 'FIRE' to alert others in the home
- Don't waste time investigating what's happened or rescuing valuables
- Don't tackle fires yourself as many people are injured this way. Leave it to the professionals
- Keep calm and get out, closing doors behind you to slow down the spread of fire and smoke
- Before you open a door check if it's warm with the back of your hand. If it is, don't open it as there may be a fire on the other side
- If there's smoke, keep low where the air is clearer. Call 999 as soon as it is safe to do so – 999 calls are free. Never go back into the building once you are safely outside.

## What to do if your escape route is blocked

- If you can't get out, find a safe room away from the fire, ideally one with a window that opens and access to 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 mobile phone but cannot make voice calls, you can contact the 999 emergency services by SMS text. You will only be able to use this service if you have registered with emergency SMS first
- If you're on the ground or first floor, you may be able to escape through a window. Use soft materials to cushion your fall and lower yourself down carefully. Don't jump
- If you can't open the window break the glass in the bottom corner. Make jagged edges safe with a towel or blanket
- Call 999 and ask for the fire brigade. Be ready to describe where you are and the quickest way to reach you.

## What to do if your clothes catch fire

- Don't run around, you'll make the flames worse
- Lie down and roll around. It makes it harder for the fire to spread
- Smother the flames with a heavy fabric, like a coat or blanket
- Remember to Stop, Drop and Roll!
- Be aware that fabrics that have residue of an emollient in them will easily ignite.



## Balconies

- Never use barbecues or fire pits on balconies
- Avoid storing combustible items on balconies
- Do not store household rubbish on balconies
- Do not throw away cigarette butts on balconies
- Do not use flammable floor coverings and screening on your balcony.
- Smoking in communal balconies is prohibited, however If you smoke on your private balcony, please ensure you have a means to put out the cigarette butt completely e.g. a container with water.



# Extra advice for purpose-built maisonettes or blocks of flats

## If there is a fire or smoke inside your maisonette or flat and your escape route is clear

- Get everyone out, close the door and walk as calmly as possible out of the building
- Do not use the lift
- Call **999**, give your address including the number of your flat and state which floor the fire is on.

## If there is a fire or smoke inside your maisonette or flat but your escape route is NOT clear

- It may be safer to stay in your maisonette or flat until the fire brigade arrives
- Close the door and use soft materials to block any gaps to stop the smoke
- Go to a window and call for help
- Dial **999**, give your address including the number of your flat and state which floor the fire is on.

## If there is a fire in another part of the building but not inside your maisonette or flat

- Purpose-built maisonettes or blocks of flats are built to give you some protection from fire. Walls, floors, and doors will hold back flames and smoke for a minimum of 30 to 60 minutes
- If you are in your flat, you are usually safer staying there unless heat or smoke is affecting you. Stay safe and call **999**. Tell the fire brigade where you are and the best way to reach you
- If you are within the communal areas of the building, leave and call **999**.

## What to consider as part of your escape plan

- Fit smoke alarms on every level of your home, on a ceiling, or high up on a wall, if the instructions state they are suitable for wall mounting. Make sure you include every room where a fire could start
- Know the fire escape plan for your building. Talk to your housing officer/supported housing officer if you are unsure
- Make sure everyone you live with including visitors spending the night, are aware of your plan and know how to raise the alarm in the event of a fire
- Communal staircases, corridors and balconies must be kept clear of anything that may block your escape such as prams, bicycles, or mobility scooters
- Household rubbish should always be taken to the refuse area immediately and not left in communal areas
- It is easy to get confused if it is dark or smoky so it's important to know your route out of the building using the exit stairs. Count the number of doors you need to go through or use familiar objects to guide you to help with your escape in the event of a fire
- Your home may be provided with an alternative escape route. Always make sure it is kept clear and you can access it at any time.

# Rented accommodation

## L&Q's responsibilities

L&Q has certain responsibilities, and we will tell you everything related to your building which may affect your safety.

- Install one smoke alarm on each storey of your rental property
- Install one CO alarm in any room that contains a solid fuel burning appliance
- Test each alarm at the beginning of the tenancy.

## We will also

- Ensure all gas and electric appliances supplied are safe and in good working order
- Get gas appliances checked annually by a Gas Safe registered engineer
- Make sure that furniture and furnishings provided by us are fire resistant and meet safety regulations.

## If you live in a maisonettes or flat of any height, we will also

- Carry out a fire risk assessment of your building and inform you about any risks identified. This will include fire procedures and evacuation information
- Provide you with fire-resisting and self-closing front doors, alarms inside your home (smoke, heat, and CO) and emergency lighting in the common parts where needed
- Ensure that escape routes are clearly signed so that anyone will be able to find the exit if there is a fire
- Place signage with clear instruction in and around lifts to explain what to do if there is a fire
- Keep communal stairs, corridors, and landings free of any clutter
- Supply you with details of any changes to the fire evacuation plan when necessary.

## Your responsibilities

- You should follow the advice in this booklet on how to prevent fires in your home
- You are personally responsible for making sure that any alarms within your property are working correctly by ensuring you test them regularly.

**If you are a new tenant and have concerns about any of our responsibilities listed above, please contact the customer services team on 0300 456 9996 to raise your concerns.**



# Home fire safety visits

The Fire and Rescue Services (fire brigade) carry out home fire safety or wellbeing visits to provide fire safety advice in the home. This includes information on prevention, detection and escape. Free smoke alarms and specialist alarms can also be fitted where needed.

If you need a home fire safety or wellbeing visit, please contact your local Fire and Rescue Service (fire brigade)

**Below is a list of the Fire and Rescue Services (fire brigade) in prominent locations where L&Q have properties.**

Fire and Rescue Service (fire brigade)	Web link to request a home fire safety or wellbeing visit
London Fire Brigade	<a href="https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/safety/the-home/home-fire-safety/home-fire-safety-checker-hfsc/">https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/safety/the-home/home-fire-safety/home-fire-safety-checker-hfsc/</a>
Essex County Fire and Rescue Service	<a href="http://www.essex-fire.gov.uk/Home_Fire_Safety/Home_Safety_Advice/">http://www.essex-fire.gov.uk/Home_Fire_Safety/Home_Safety_Advice/</a>
Surrey Fire and Rescue Service	<a href="https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/people-and-community/fire-and-rescue/home-safety/advice/safe-and-well">https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/people-and-community/fire-and-rescue/home-safety/advice/safe-and-well</a>
Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service	<a href="https://www.hantsfire.gov.uk/safety/home-safe-home/safe-and-well/">https://www.hantsfire.gov.uk/safety/home-safe-home/safe-and-well/</a>
Kent Fire and Rescue Service	<a href="https://www.kent.fire-uk.org/your-safety/home-safety/safe-and-well-visits/">https://www.kent.fire-uk.org/your-safety/home-safety/safe-and-well-visits/</a>
Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service	<a href="https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/fire-and-rescue/request-a-visit-from-the-fire-service/request-a-visit-to-your-home-or-school.aspx#DynamicJumpMenuManager_1_Anchor_1">https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/fire-and-rescue/request-a-visit-from-the-fire-service/request-a-visit-to-your-home-or-school.aspx#DynamicJumpMenuManager_1_Anchor_1</a>
Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service	<a href="https://bucksfire.gov.uk/faq/how-do-i-book-a-fire-and-wellness-visit/">https://bucksfire.gov.uk/faq/how-do-i-book-a-fire-and-wellness-visit/</a>
East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service	<a href="https://www.esfrs.org/your-safety/home-safety-visits/">https://www.esfrs.org/your-safety/home-safety-visits/</a>
Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service	<a href="https://www.manchesterfire.gov.uk/staying-safe/what-we-do/fire-safety-at-home/">https://www.manchesterfire.gov.uk/staying-safe/what-we-do/fire-safety-at-home/</a>

If you live in an area that is not listed above or are having trouble arranging a visit, please speak to your housing officer/supported housing officer who may be able to assist or provide you with the necessary information.



# Fire safety advice for users of healthcare products and equipment

## Dynamic airflow pressure relieving mattresses and overlays

These items are used to prevent and treat pressure sores and ulcers that can be caused by extended periods of immobility. The mattress is filled with air by a pump which adjusts pressure according to the patient's needs. When punctured by a heat source such as a match the escaping airflow can cause a fire to spread rapidly. The emergency battery backup may continue to pump air which can cause the fire to burn longer.

### Fire safety suggestions:

- Never smoke near an airflow mattress or let the person you care for smoke in bed
- Keep ignition sources such as candles, incense sticks or oil burner away from airflow mattresses
- Never use an electric blanket on an airflow mattress
- Ensure that electrical equipment is well maintained and kept a safe distance from airflow mattresses
- Keep fires and heaters away from airflow mattresses
- Never charge electrical items or place anything hot like hairdryers or hair straighteners on airflow mattresses.

## Incontinence products

Incontinence pads and pants help people live at home with more dignity. However, these products are often supplied in large quantities to people who have continence problems. They can be bulky and difficult to store and can catch fire, adding fuel to a developing fire.

### Fire safety suggestions:

- Always store incontinence products away from heat sources such as heaters, candles, chargers or anywhere else that they are likely to be subject to heat or flame
- Try not to store the supplies all in one place – ideally not next to the person's bed or chair.



## Home oxygen therapy

Used by people with severe respiratory conditions, oxygen therapy provides air that contains more oxygen than normal. Specialist equipment (which can include cylinders and portable units) is used to pipe medical oxygen through either a nasal cannula or facemask to the user.

Using medical oxygen creates an oxygen rich environment. This greatly increases the opportunity for a fire to start and grow. Smoking or the use of any naked flames such as candles, fires and cooking anywhere near oxygen is extremely dangerous and increases the risk of significant injury in the event of a fire.

## Fire Safety Suggestions

- Never smoke or allow someone else to smoke nearby whilst using oxygen equipment. This includes e-cigarettes and their chargers
- Do not use matches or any naked flame such as candles, incense sticks or oil burners in the same room as oxygen equipment
- Keep well away from gas stoves, portable or open fires
- Do not use flammable emollient products
- Make sure oxygen is turned off when not in use.

## Emollient creams

Skin creams, sometimes known as emollients are used by many people every day to help manage different dry skin conditions such as eczema, psoriasis, and ichthyosis. The creams are easily transferred from skin onto clothing, bedding, and bandages.

Tests and research have shown that the dried-on cream makes the fabric more flammable and the resulting fire burns quickly and intensely, resulting in serious injury or death. It's important for anyone using these creams to avoid any naked flame.

## Fire Safety Suggestions

- Never smoke in bed
- Do not smoke if there is any chance your clothing or dressings could be contaminated with these products
- Do not cook with gas or electric hobs, if there is any chance your clothing or dressings could be contaminated with these products
- Do not sit too close to any open fires, gas fires or halogen heaters
- Wash your clothing and bedding regularly at the highest temperature recommended by the fabric care instructions. This should reduce some of the contamination but will not remove it completely and so washing fabrics does not completely remove the fire risk
- Tell your healthcare professional and consider alternative non-paraffin-based creams.

## Vulnerable residents

# Hoarding disorder

## What is hoarding disorder?

The NHS summarises the problem as; “A hoarding disorder is where someone acquires an excessive number of items and stores them in a chaotic manner. The items can be of little or no monetary value and usually result in unmanageable amounts of clutter.”

The link below gives important fire safety advice from the London Fire Brigade to hoarders.

[https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/media/4840/hoarding-leaflet\\_feb-2019-final.pdf](https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/media/4840/hoarding-leaflet_feb-2019-final.pdf)

If you are or are aware of a hoarder who is an L&Q resident, please contact your housing officer/supported housing officer.

You can also get assistance by contacting hoardinguk online on [www.hoardinguk.org](http://www.hoardinguk.org) or by calling **020 3239 1600**

L&Q has a hoarding policy and procedure. We will contact the hoarder with caution, empathy and arrange specialist support to ensure they get the necessary assistance they need.

“

A hoarding disorder is where someone acquires an excessive number of items and stores them in a chaotic manner.

”



## Vulnerable residents

L&Q residents could meet the definition of vulnerability for any of the following reasons

- Physical – vulnerable due to physical disability, chronic illness, or age-related frailty
- Mental wellbeing- vulnerable due to needing support with their mental health, or addiction issues (drug, alcohol, gambling etc.)
- Personal circumstances, for example domestic abuse
- Financial – vulnerable based on low or precarious income whether from employment or benefits
- Communication - vulnerable because of their inability to communicate with us and therefore, access our services, for example difficulty with English, or if they have a learning disability or a sensory impairment

## Identifying vulnerable residents

L&Q has a Vulnerable Resident’s Policy outlining how we identify and engage with vulnerable residents. All residents with a vulnerability are offered a needs and risk assessment to identify their support needs, and signpost or refer them to the appropriate statutory or voluntary services.

## Person Centred Fire Risk Assessments (PCRA)

L&Q carry out a Person Centred Risk Assessment (PCRA) to identify specific risks from a fire on vulnerable residents (if applicable). This information will also be available to the Fire and Rescue Services (fire brigade) in the event of an emergency particularly where assistance is needed with evacuation.

If you are aware of a vulnerable person in your block or other L&Q premises who needs support, please contact your housing officer. They will be able to arrange an initial assessment or refer the vulnerable person to the appropriate service.



# Carers and support workers

If you have a carer or support worker who regularly visits your home to assist you live independently, please ensure carers/support workers are aware of the following:

- The fire hazards associated with health care products and equipment such as dynamic air flow mattress, oxygen, emollient creams etc
- The fire evacuation procedures and how to raise the alarm
- How to help residents with limited mobility test their smoke alarms weekly
- How to switch off all electric appliances at the end of their visits
- To not block escape routes within your flat and in communal areas with storage
- To not allow the build-up of domestic waste in resident's home or leave them in communal areas; they should be disposed of appropriately in the bin stores
- How to report any fire safety concerns to report-a-repair on **0300 456 9996** or to the housing officer.



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L&Q

**For more information**

L&Q Group

T: 0300 456 9998

[www.lqgroup.org.uk](http://www.lqgroup.org.uk)

 @LQHomesmatter