



# Hoarding Behaviour

If you store (or anyone you know stores) large amounts of possessions in and around the home, a fire could be devastating, affecting you, your loved ones and neighbours. It also puts our firefighters at increased risk.

Follow this important advice and keep your home safe from fire.

### SMOKING

The best and safest option is not to smoke but if you are not ready to quit:

- Smoke outside and always make sure cigarettes are put right out.
- Never smoke in bed or anywhere you could fall asleep.
- Use proper ashtrays and never throw hot ash into the bin or leave lit cigarettes unattended.
- Think about switching to e-cigarettes (vaping) as a safer alternative.

If you need advice or help to quit smoking call the Smokefree National Helpline on **0300 123 1044** or visit [www.nhs.uk/smokefree/help-and-advice/support](http://www.nhs.uk/smokefree/help-and-advice/support)

### FLAMMABLES

- Stored newspapers and mail will increase the intensity and rapid spread of a fire. Try to recycle on a regular basis and include items like plastic bottles and clothing.
- Do not store cylinders in your home. Never store them in basements, under stairs or in cupboards with electric meters or equipment as they are a serious hazard during a fire.

### CANDLES

- A safer option to using candles or tea lights are LED flameless candles.
- If you do use candles, tea lights or incense burners place them in heat-resistant holders that hold them firmly.
- Make sure they are placed on a flat, stable, heat-resistant surface, away from anything that can catch fire.
- Never leave them unattended.

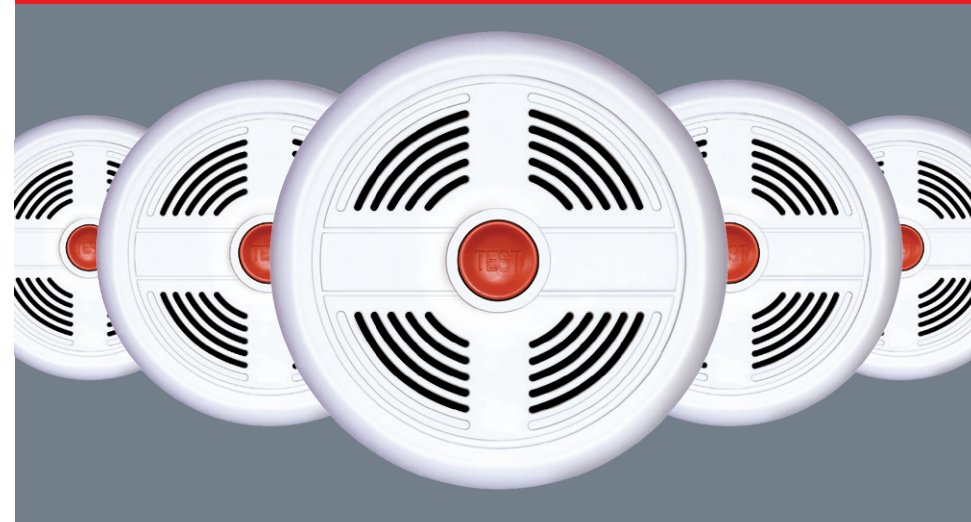
### ELECTRICALS AND HEATING

- Do not place items on top of, or close to heaters, lamps or other electrical equipment.
- Switch off and unplug electrical items, such as TVs, and avoid charging devices like mobile phones when you sleep.

### COOKING

- Whatever your methods of cooking – it's very important to keep the area clear of any stored items and never leave cooking unattended.
- Fit a heat alarm in the kitchen.

Working alarms save lives! Early detection is vital and could give you extra time to escape.



A fire can start in any room. Fit smoke alarms in hallways and landings and in any room where people smoke, use candles, incense sticks or portable heaters, or where electrical equipment such as satellite boxes, heaters, computers or mobile phones are switched on or left charging.

- Linked alarms that activate all together and Telecare services that provide call centre support in an emergency are available. Speak to your healthcare team or adult social services to see if you are eligible for help with these.
- Fit a heat alarm in the kitchen – they detect a rise in temperature but won't be set off by cooking fumes.
- Press the button! Test your alarms at least once a month.

### HOME FIRE SAFETY VISITS

It's easy to book a free home fire safety visit from London Fire Brigade. We provide fire safety information that is both sensitive to personal needs and the individuals home. This includes how to prevent fires, the importance of working alarms to detect a fire and your escape plans.

Smoke alarms can be fitted for free and we can advise on extra fire safety measures if needed.

#### To book a Home Fire Safety Visit:

**Freephone:** 0800 028 4428

**Email:** [smokealarms@london-fire.gov.uk](mailto:smokealarms@london-fire.gov.uk)

**Text/SMS:** 07860 021 319

## DO YOU KNOW YOUR ESCAPE PLAN?



A blocked escape route can cause delay to you, add to the intensity of a fire and may also put firefighters at risk.

- Work out your best escape route, then plan and practise how you would get out in a fire. Make sure everyone in your home knows the plan.
- Never store or stack items where they could block or hinder your escape. Keep all your escape routes clear, that includes stairs, hallways and landings.
- Always keep door and window keys where everyone you live with can find them.
- Make sure you have enough space to open and close doors around your home. A closed door can significantly help to reduce the spread of fire and smoke.
- In the event of a fire, shout to warn others, do not attempt to put it out yourself – get out and stay out.
- Never stop on your way out to collect possessions or attempt to go back inside once you are out safely.

## SUPPORT AND ADVICE

There are many organisations that can provide you with support and advice. Contact **London Fire Brigade** for fire safety advice or **hoardinguk.org** for more information about hoarding.



[london-fire.gov.uk](https://www.london-fire.gov.uk)