

Home fire safety guide for purpose-built flats and maisonettes

IF YOU HAVE A FIRE, DO YOU KNOW YOUR PLAN?

Follow this advice if you live in a purpose-built block of flats or maisonettes, of any height, with shared communal corridors, external walkways, staircases or entrances.

If there is a fire or smoke inside your flat or maisonette:

- 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 flat or maisonette but your escape route is NOT clear:

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

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

- Purpose-built blocks of flats and maisonettes 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.
- You are usually safer staying in your own flat unless heat or smoke is affecting you. If you are in your flat, stay put and call 999. Tell London Fire Brigade where you are and the best way to reach you.
- If you are within the common parts of the building, leave and call 999.



Home fire safety

KEEP YOUR PURPOSE-BUILT FLAT OR MAISONETTE SAFE

Fit smoke alarms and test them monthly

A fire can start anywhere in the home so early detection is vital.

- Fit smoke alarms in all rooms such as the lounge and bedrooms.
- Include landings and hallways but not kitchens or bathrooms because steam can cause false alarms.
- Fit a heat alarm in your kitchen which can detect the increase in temperature caused by a fire but will not be set off by cooking fumes or steam.

Fire risks exist in rooms where:

- Electrical equipment is left switched on or on charge.
- People smoke.
- Candles, incense sticks or naked flames are used.
- Portable heaters are used.

Smoking

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

- Never smoke in bed or anywhere you could fall asleep.
- Never throw cigarettes out of your window or balcony, make sure you put them right out.
- Do not leave any type of lit cigarette or pipe unattended.
- Use proper ashtrays and never throw hot ash into the bin.

Candles and matches

- Candles, tea lights and incense burners should only be placed in stable, heat-resistant holders and should not be left unattended. They should be kept well away from curtains, furniture and clothes.

- Keep matches and lighters well out of reach of children.

Heating and electrics

- Sit at least one metre away from heaters.
- Never put a heater near curtains, furniture and clothes.
- Don't overload electrical sockets.

Communal areas, stairs and balconies

- Never store anything in communal areas including balconies. Items can block your escape route and be a fire risk.
- Don't use your balcony for barbeques.

TAKE EXTRA CARE IN THE KITCHEN

- Fit a heat alarm in your kitchen.
- Don't cook if you are tired or have been drinking.
- Never leave cooking unattended.

If a pan does catch fire:

- Don't try to move it or throw water on it – that will make it worse.
- Turn off the heat if you can do so safely.
- Leave the room, close the door, shout to warn others to get out and call 999.

STAY SAFE WHEN YOU GO TO BED

- Close all doors as this helps to prevent fire and smoke spreading.
- Switch off and unplug electrical items such as TVs and avoid charging devices like mobile phones when you sleep.
- Make sure candles are out before you go to bed.
- Check your heaters and cookers are turned off.
- Keep door and window keys where everyone can find them.

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR IN YOUR BUILDING

Fire safety in all buildings is dependent upon good maintenance and housekeeping. It is important to report any concerns you might have to your landlord. It is essential that:

- All flat front doors and doors on corridors and staircases must be 'self-closing' fire doors.
- Fire doors must all 'self-close' properly, and not be held or wedged open. They are designed to help stop the spread of fire.
- Corridors, staircases and balconies must be kept clear of belongings or clutter, as this can block escape routes and stop firefighters doing their job.
- Everyone who lives in the building knows the evacuation plan and escape routes are clearly signposted.

PLAN YOUR ESCAPE ROUTE

Know it Keep it clear

For more information go to
london-fire.gov.uk