

# Home Fire Safety Pack



**A WORKING  
SMOKE ALARM  
CAN SAVE  
YOUR LIFE**



## **Seirbhís Dóiteáin & Tarrthála na Gaillimhe Galway Fire & Rescue Service**



**SMOKE KILLS**

**Chimney Fires are at best filthy and at worst can destroy your home**

**They put your family at risk & also needlessly tie up fire service resources**



**Make sure you have your chimney or flue inspected and cleaned at least once per year by a competent person**



**Galway Fire & Rescue**  
**Preventing – Protecting - Responding**

**SMOKE KILLS**

**COMPLETE YOUR HOME FIRE SAFETY CHECK TODAY**

- S** SMOKE ALARM
- T** TEST ALARMS WEEKLY
- O** OBVIOUS DANGERS
- P** PLAN YOUR ESCAPE



**GALWAY FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE**

**fire safety**  
*Be on your guard*



**CLEAN YOUR CHIMNEY OR FLUE  
AT LEAST ONCE PER YEAR**

**DON'T SMOKE IN BED OR USE  
CANDLES OR TEA LIGHTS**

**DON'T OVER-LOAD SOCKETS &  
SWITCH OFF APPLIANCES AT NIGHT**

**WHEN COOKING - DON'T LEAVE  
THE COOKER UNATTENDED**

# SMOKE KILLS

**NO SMOKE ALARM. NO CHANCE.**

- S** SMOKE ALARM
- T** TEST ALARMS WEEKLY
- O** OBVIOUS DANGERS
- P** PLAN YOUR ESCAPE



**GALWAY FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE**

**firesafety**  
*Be on your guard*



### **SMOKE ALARM**

- A smoke alarm is a warning device that detects smoke at the earliest stage of fire
- Fit at least one smoke alarm on every floor of your home ideally in the hallway
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions of how to fit & position the alarm



### **TEST WEEKLY**

- Always test your smoke alarm once a week
- Change the battery once a year or when it starts to beep
- Have a spare battery in the house for your alarm
- Assist vulnerable people by testing their alarms for them
- Keep your alarm free from dust



### **OBVIOUS DANGERS**

- Extinguish and dispose of cigarettes properly
- Never smoke in bed & be extra careful if you are tired, taking prescription drugs or having a drink
- Never leave cooking appliances unattended
- Use a spark guard for an open fire
- Don't use candles near flammable materials & don't leave them unattended
- Keep matches & lighters away from children
- Don't overload electrical sockets



### **PLAN YOUR ESCAPE**

- Ensure your family know what to do in a fire & how to escape safely
- Know where keys are kept at night
- Keep hallways clear from obstacles
- Plan a bedtime routine (close doors, turn off electric appliances that are not required)
- Get out, stay out & get the fire service out



### **HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF FROM CARBON MONOXIDE**

- Be aware: any appliance, burning any type of fuel can produce carbon monoxide
- Ensure fuel burning appliances are properly installed & regularly maintained by a qualified service agent
- Keep vents, flues & chimneys clear
- Use fuel burning appliances correctly
- Have at least one audible carbon monoxide alarm installed in your home & and anywhere else you burn fuel

**GET OUT, STAY OUT  
& GET THE FIRE SERVICE OUT**

## What to do:

Plan for a safe place in case you cannot get out of the house.

- ✓ Make sure there is a phone or personal alert in the room to call for help.
- ✓ Make sure there is a window so you can either get out or call for help. Stay by the window if you can't get out.
- ✓ Close the door and seal the bottom with towels or blankets to stop smoke getting in.

## Call 999 or 112

- ✓ Ask for the fire service.
- ✓ Speak calmly and clearly.
- ✓ Give your address and phone number. If you are calling on your mobile, say what county you are in.
- ✓ Only hang up when the operator tells you to.

## Don't:

- ✗ Go back into a burning house for any reason.
- ✗ Borrow batteries from the smoke alarm.
- ✗ Have mirrors over fire places with real fires. Your clothes might catch fire if you stand too close to look in the mirror.



## FACTS!

- On average 46 people die each year in fires in Ireland.
- Fires do not always happen to other people.
- The next fire could be in your home.

## Remember:

Be careful when using portable electric, gas or oil heaters.

- Don't use heaters near furniture, curtains or beds.
- Don't leave heaters on when you go to bed.
- Take care if pets are near the heaters.
- Don't use heaters to dry clothes.



## Fire safety at home



Comhshaoil, Pobal agus Rialtas Áitiúil  
Environment, Community and Local Government

Custom House, Dublin 1, Ireland  
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Comhshaoil, Pobal agus Rialtas Áitiúil  
Environment, Community and Local Government

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# Prevent fire

## Don't:

- ✗ Smoke when you are in bed, tired or on medication.
- ✗ Leave the room when there are candles burning.
- ✗ Leave young children alone near an open fire or cooker.
- ✗ Leave matches and lighters where children can get them.
- ✗ Leave the room when a chip or frying pan is on even for a minute.
- ✗ Overload electric sockets – one socket, one plug.
- ✗ Use electric appliances that don't work.
- ✗ Run electrical appliances from a light socket.
- ✗ Use a heater or the cooker to dry clothes
- ✗ Use petrol or paraffin to light a solid fuel stove.

## Make sure to:

- ✓ Clean your chimney and service your heating system at least once a year.
- ✓ Use a sparkguard with open fires.
- ✓ Keep your gas cylinder outside, on solid ground and away from anything hot.
- ✓ Use a proper holder for candles.
- ✓ Keep a suitable fire extinguisher and fire blanket in the kitchen.
- ✓ Empty ashtrays before you go to bed. Run the contents under the tap before you bin them.
- ✓ Repair or replace faulty electrical appliances immediately
- ✓ Do a fire safety check before you go to bed.
- ✓ Close all doors at night.



# Detect fire

Smoke alarms give you an early warning of a fire. 82% of fires that kill people are in homes with no working smoke alarm.

- ✓ Fit a smoke alarm in every room (except the bathroom and the garage) to protect your home. Fit a heat alarm in the kitchen.
- ✓ Test your smoke alarms at least once a week.
- ✓ Change the batteries every year.
- ✓ Change the battery right away when you hear the warning beep.

# Escape

Know what to do when you hear a smoke alarm so you and your family can get out safely.

- ✓ Make an escape plan for your home and practise with everyone who lives with you.
- ✓ Plan at least two ways out in case one way is blocked by fire.
- ✓ Have a meeting point in a safe place outside the house.
- ✓ Keep your way out clear day and night.
- ✓ Keep the keys to doors and windows nearby.
- ✓ Know where the nearest phone is to call the fire service.
- ✓ If you hear the fire alarm, check doors with the back of your hand for heat before you open them. If they are warm, the way might be blocked by fire.

## FACT!

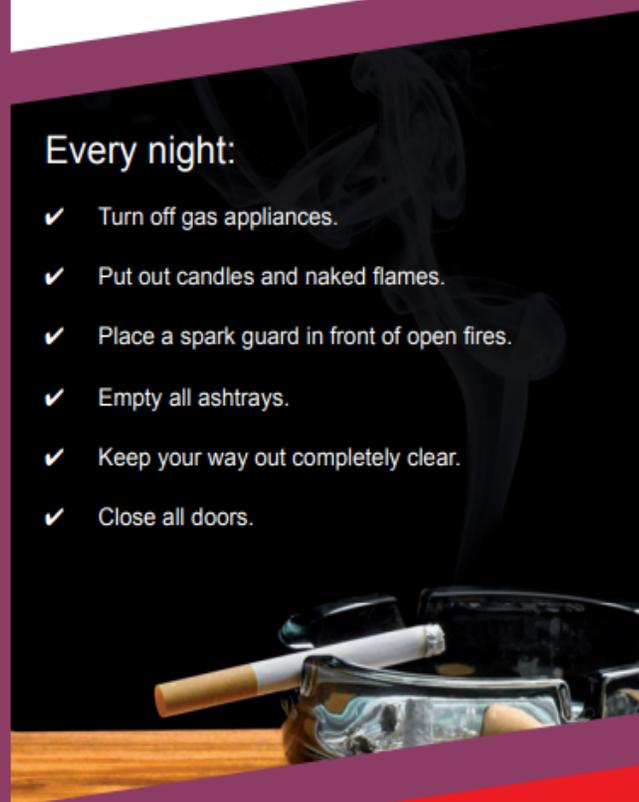
Over 1,000 people every year attend casualty with burns or scald injuries.  
(HIPE & NPRS Unit ESRI)

# Fire safety check

A fire safety check only takes a few minutes but it could mean the difference between life and death. Make it part of your routine before you go to bed.

## Every night:

- ✓ Turn off gas appliances.
- ✓ Put out candles and naked flames.
- ✓ Place a spark guard in front of open fires.
- ✓ Empty all ashtrays.
- ✓ Keep your way out completely clear.
- ✓ Close all doors.



## Chimney fire signs

- A chimney fire produces excessive smoke.
- Burning embers may fall down the chimney.
- Flames or sparks may be visible from the top of the chimney.
- A loud roaring noise may be audible.

*A chimney fire can turn into a house fire if not dealt with!*



## If a fire breaks out in your chimney or stove

- Get out.
- Call 112 or 999 without delay.
- Ask for the fire Service.
- Speak calmly and clearly.
- Give your address and phone number. If you are calling on your mobile, say what county you are in.
- Only hang up when the operator tells you to.
- Stay out.



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## Chimney and Stove Fire Safety



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## Installation

- Installation of stoves must be done by a competent installer and in line with Technical Guidance Document J (Heat Producing Appliances) - Building Regulations.
- Sufficient space from combustible materials should be allowed around the stove and the flue.
- Ensure sufficient ventilation is provided for the stove. Never block up air vents/grilles.

## Maintenance

- Have your chimney cleaned regularly
- Ensure stoves, boilers and flues are serviced regularly by a competent engineer.



## Usage

- ✓ Do not use flammable liquids to start a fire.
- ✓ Never burn household waste.
- ✓ Use only the recommended fuel for your stove. Creosote is a combustible, tarry by-product of burning wood or fossil fuels which can clog up chimneys and flues and cause fires – using seasoned wood reduces creosote build-up.
- ✓ Use a spark guard to prevent sparks from open fires falling onto the floor.
- ✓ Dispose of ashes before setting new fires by shovelling into a metal bucket with a metal lid. This should be placed outside away from buildings. Ashes and embers can stay hot for days and ignite combustibles.



## Alarms

- A carbon monoxide alarm should be installed in all homes with fuel-burning appliances, including open fires. Install one in every room containing a stove or open fire.
- Remember these are no substitute for regular inspection and maintenance of stoves, vents, flues and chimneys.
- Smoke alarms should be fitted in every room (except the bathroom and garage) to fully protect your home. Fit a heat alarm in the kitchen.
- It is essential that smoke alarms are fitted in the hall and landing of every home.
- Ensure that alarms can be heard in bedrooms.
- Test alarms regularly.

# Prevention

On average **39** people **die** each year in *FIRES* in this country.

***FIRES* do not always happen to other people.**

**The next *FIRE* could be in *YOUR HOME!***

## Together We Can STOP Fire

**STOP** stands for:

- **S** - is for Smoke alarms. Make sure you have at least one on every level/floor.
- **T** - is for Test your smoke alarms weekly or ask someone to check it for you.
- **O** - is for Obvious dangers. Look out for fire risks like overloaded sockets, candles and unattended appliances.
- **P** - is for Plan your escape route. Keep access routes clear and have your keys at the ready.

**Avoid:**

- Smoking when tired
- Leaving burning candles unattended
- Leaving young children unattended
- Leaving matches and lighters where children can get them
- Leaving chip pans, frying pans, etc unattended
- Standing too close to fires, heaters, etc
- Using faulty electrical appliances
- Overloading sockets

**Make sure to:**

- Have your chimney cleaned at least once a year
- Use a sparkguard with open fires
- Use proper holders when burning candles
- Keep ashtrays empty when not in use
- Have a suitable fire extinguisher and fire blanket in your kitchen
- Have faulty electrical appliances repaired or replaced immediately
- Close all doors at night time
- Carry out a routine fire safety check before going to bed

# Planning Your Escape Route

Have an “Evacuation Plan” for you and your family in the event of a fire.

If a fire occurs in your home you may have to get out in dark and difficult conditions.

This can be especially challenging if members of your family are very young, older or infirm. Escaping from a fire will be a lot easier if you have already planned your escape route and know where to go:

- Involve everyone in the house, including visitors to your home
- The normal way out is the preferred choice
- Keep your escape route clear of obstructions
- Keep keys to doors and windows immediately available
- Protect your escape route by closing all doors into it, especially at night
- Practise using the agreed plan
- Select a safe meeting place outside
- Make everyone aware of how to call the fire service

If you are unable to use the normal way out, consider alternative routes:

- Rear doors
- Patio doors
- Windows

Make sure everyone is aware of these alternatives. If you discover a fire, or the smoke alarm sounds, you will only have a short time to get out. If possible:

- Close the door of the room where the fire is
- Get everyone out as quickly as possible and **stay out**
- Telephone the fire service on 112 from a neighbour's house or mobile phone
- **Never** go back into a house until the fire service says it is safe to do so

If you are cut off by fire, try to remain calm:

- Close the door and use towels or sheets to block any gaps
- Try to make your way to the window
- If the room becomes smoky, crawl along the floor

Open the window and try to attract the attention of others

# Fire Safety Tips

## Do

- Plan for a safe refuge in case you cannot escape from the house. This is a room where all of the family can gather to wait to be rescued. Take the following precautions:
- Make sure there is a phone in the room to call for help
- Try to have a room with a window so you can either escape or call out for help (stay by the window)
- Close the door and seal the bottom with towels or blankets to stop harmful smoke entering
- Call the emergency services
- Dial 999 or 112
- Tell the operator what service you require.
- Speak calmly and clearly giving the address of the fire and your phone number. (If using a mobile phone the operator may ask what county you are in)
- Only hang up when the operator tells you to

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## Don't

- Re-enter a burning house for personal items
- Borrow batteries from the Smoke Alarm
- Have mirrors over fireplaces with real fires

# Obvious Dangers – Do a Routine Fire Safety Check

Look for obvious dangers. A "*Routine Fire Safety Check*" should only take a couple of minutes but it could mean the difference between **Life** and **Death**.

Walk around your house with a view to keeping your home **safe** and **secure**.

- Unplug all unnecessary electrical appliances.
- Turn off all unnecessary gas appliances.
- Make sure all candles and naked flames are extinguished.
- Place a sparkguard in front of any open fire.
- Empty all ashtrays.
- Are all escape routes completely clear of obstructions?

Close all doors to reduce the spread of fire and smoke.

## Detection

Smoke Alarms are designed to give you an early warning of a fire. 82% of fires resulting in fatalities had no working Smoke Alarm.

Make sure to:

- Have at least one Smoke Alarm (on the ceiling) on every level in your home
- Test your smoke alarms at least once a week
- Change the batteries every year
- When the warning beep sounds change the battery immediately

## Testing and Maintenance

Smoke alarms require very little maintenance but to ensure it operates when needed:

- Once a week test the smoke alarm by pushing and holding the test button until it activates.
- Every 6 months vacuum and brush the casing to get rid of dust.
- Every year change the battery.
- Every 10 years replace the smoke alarm.

# General Tips on Smoke Alarms

There are 2 types of Smoke Alarm “Ionisation” and “Optical”

## Ionisation Smoke Alarm

The cheapest and most common type. Very sensitive to small particles of smoke from "flaming" fires like chip pans. Will detect this type of fire before the smoke gets too thick.

## Optical Smoke Alarm

More expensive type but more effective at detecting larger particles from "slow burning" fires such as smouldering foam or P.V.C. wiring.

## How many smoke alarms do I need?

For **maximum** protection one smoke alarm per room except the bathroom, kitchen and garage. Heat alarms may be considered where fumes from cooking or smoke from cigarettes or open fires could lead to unwanted alarm activations.

For **minimum** protection one smoke alarm for each level/floor of your home.

## Where do I fit them?

On the ceiling as close to the centre of the room as possible.

Keep in mind your ability to hear the smoke alarm at night with the door closed.

## Know your Evacuation Plan!

The purpose of a Smoke Alarm is to give an early warning of an outbreak of fire! It is **vital** that you and your family know exactly what to do when the Smoke Alarm activates.

# Facts on Smoke Alarms

1. On average **39** people **die** in fires nationally every year. Tragically most of these deaths could have been prevented if a working smoke alarm had been present in the home.
2. A national survey, carried out recently, on smoke alarm ownership found that there are over **300,000** households who **do not** have **any** smoke alarms installed!
3. Smoke Alarms **do not** “prevent” fires!
4. Most fires happen at night when people are asleep and smoke does not always wake people up but can actually put them into a deeper sleep.
5. Smoke Alarms **do not** “put out” fires!
6. **Smoke inhalation**, not heat or flames, causes the majority of fire deaths and the smoke given off by some furnishing materials can kill very quickly.
7. 10 year smoke alarms are available as ionisation or optical alarms and are fitted with a long life lithium battery or a sealed power pack that lasts for 10 years.