

health and safety

fire safety

did you know...?

- You are four times more likely to die in a fire if you don't have a smoke alarm that works.
- Fire kills over 350 people in the UK every year and injures more than 9,000.
- Half the fires in the home are caused by cooking incidents.
- Faulty electrics (overloading sockets or adaptors) causes around 6,000 fires in British homes every year.

smoke alarms save lives

- Test your smoke alarm weekly to see if it's working.
- If it has a battery, change it every year.
- Never remove the battery unless you are replacing it with a new one.
- Soha replaces smoke detectors every ten years.

in your kitchen - cook safely

- Take care if you have to leave the kitchen whilst cooking. Never leave pans unattended and make sure cooking appliances are turned off when you have finished with them.
- Keep tea towels and cloths away from the cooker/hob as these can catch light easily.
- Avoid leaving children in the kitchen alone when cooking and keep matches and pan handles out of reach.



- Make sure toasters are regularly emptied of crumbs and kept away from flammable items such as kitchen rolls and curtains.
- Never throw water on burning fat or oil – turn off the heat under the pan or even all the power if it's safe to do so. Leave the pan of oil to cool off.
- Do not put anything metallic in the microwave.

if you smoke

More people die in fires caused by cigarettes, cigars, pipes etc. than in fires caused by anything else.

- Don't leave a lit cigarette, cigar or pipe lying around as they can easily fall over/out of the ashtray and start a fire.
- Take extra care if you smoke when you are tired, or if you have been drinking or are taking prescription medication: you may fall asleep and set fire to where you are sitting/lying.
- Never smoke in bed.
- Always stub out cigarettes out and dispose of them properly.
- Make sure ashtrays are emptied safely before you go to bed.

electricity

- An extension lead or adapter will have a limit to how many amps it can take so be careful not to overload them.
- Always use the correct fuse to prevent overheating.
- Know the danger signs of overheating appliances. These include a fuse blowing, lights flickering or brown scorch marks on sockets and plugs.
- Check electrical items regularly for frayed or damaged cables especially if they are hidden from view such as behind furniture.
- Keep electrical items away from water.
- Un-plugging appliances (when not in use and at bedtime) helps to reduce the risk of fire.
- Make sure you know where your fuse box (or consumer unit) is so that you can turn it off quickly in an emergency.

candles

- Make sure candles and tea lights are secured in a proper holder away from materials that may catch fire, such as curtains.
- Always put candles out when you are leaving the room or going to bed. Blowing candles out can send sparks and hot wax flying, so use a snuffer or a spoon to put them out if you can.

if you live in a flat with shared communal areas

- Do not store any of your belongings in the communal areas outside your home. Communal hallways must be kept clear at all times so that escape routes are not blocked if there is a fire.
- Make sure that your rubbish is properly disposed of in the appropriate bins. Always put your cigarette ends in the cigarette disposal bin if there is one provided.
- Do not wedge open communal fire doors as they help to prevent the spread of smoke and fire.

home insurance

Home contents insurance can help you after a fire – for example, by replacing belongings that were destroyed in the blaze. Shop around to find the best deal for you. We have details of a home contents insurance product for social housing tenants which may provide good value for money. Call us on **0800 014 15 45** (Freephone) or email **housing@soha.co.uk** and we will send you the information.

Please note Soha Housing is **not** responsible for replacing any personal belongings, such as furniture and appliances, which are damaged by fire.

make an escape plan

It's really important you know what to do if there's a fire in your home or building. Make an escape plan and practise it regularly. If you live in a flat or a maisonette your building will have a fire strategy.

If your building has a communal area a clearly displayed Fire Action Notice will tell you what to do if there's a fire.

For more information about fire safety, or help making your escape plan, please contact us.

clear escape routes

Exit routes should be kept clear at all times. If there is a fire or any other emergency you will need to get out quickly and safely.

let us in

We carry out regular inspections to all communal areas. We need to do this by law, so please help us to keep you safe.

Fire Assessors and Inspectors always carry identification, plus a letter giving them authority to inspect if they are working with a third party. You can ask to see this at any time during their visit.

If you have any doubt please contact us immediately to get as much information as possible about the visitor/s. When you have confirmed their ID, please let them in.

ask for a free home fire safety check

The local fire service provides free home fire safety checks and in many cases will install a free smoke alarm.

Fire service staff can help you identify possible dangers and offer advice on how to keep your home safe. They can also help you develop a tailored escape plan which could be particularly important if you are older, have mobility problems or a disability.

For more information contact your local fire service at **fire.service@oxfordshire.gov.uk** or call **01865 895999**.

if you discover a fire

- Get out, stay out and call **999**. Never go back until a fire officer tells you it is safe to do so.
- If you can't call 999 yourself, shout from the window to attract the attention of others and tell them to call the fire service for you.
- If you are on the ground floor, you may be able to escape through a window. Use bedding to make the exit clear if you have to break a glass window to climb out.
- If you are trapped and can't leave, get everyone into one room, close the door and use bedding, towels or clothing to block any gap under the door that might let in smoke or fumes.

what if my clothes are on fire?

- Don't run around, as this will make the flames worse.
- Lie down, roll around on the floor. This makes it harder for the fire to spread

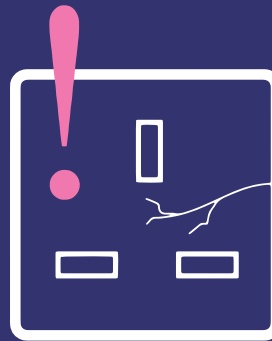
You could remember it like this:

STOP, DROP AND ROLL.

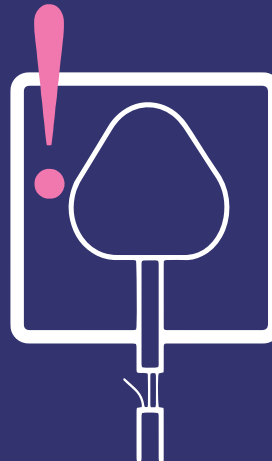
There's a lot more, detailed, information about fire safety for particular situations (such as if you have impaired vision, hearing or mobility or children in your home) or locations (such as fire safety outdoors) at the Government website

www.direct.gov.uk. You can also get free advice from your local fire and rescue service (fire.service@oxfordshire.gov.uk or call **01865 895999**).

Look out for:



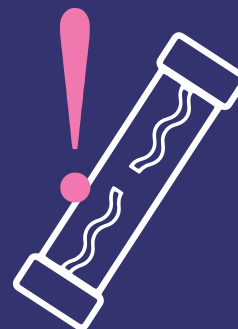
Cracked or scorched plugs and wall sockets



Loose, exposed or fraying cables or wires



A burning smell when appliances are switched on



Fuses that blow frequently

If you notice any of these faults please phone Soha immediately on 01235 515 900 or 0800 014 15 45 (Freephone)