



MAINTAINING THE SAFETY OF OUR RESIDENTS AND THE BUILDINGS THAT THEY LIVE IS OUR TOP PRIORITY

Our team are working hard to carry out the necessary routine risk assessments and make recommended remedials to protect your safety and your homes.

Hegarty Property Management Ltd, manage properties that fall within different Fire Service areas of responsibility. This guide will reference advice from The London Fire Brigade and is sound general advice.

You should visit the web site of your local Fire Service, which may have further advice or comprehensive advice on fire safety in the home. This can be found on the government website below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/fire-safety-guidance>

The links provided in this information document are for your ease of reference. If a link doesn't take you directly to the relevant site, please copy and paste the link into your address bar and search.

Alarms and Detectors

- There are two types of alarm/detectors that you can find in your home: smoke detectors and heat detectors (heat detectors are usually found in your kitchen). There should be one detector on every level of your home.
- If you own your home, you are responsible for installing detectors inside your homes and you need to check that they're working regularly – If you rent your home, your Landlord is responsible for the installation of detectors. The Fire Brigade recommends you check them at least once a month. To do that, simply push the test button to see if it is working. A sound should be emitted. If the alarm is on the ceiling, you can use an item to assist such as a broom handle.
- If your detector starts beeping at any other time, this means the battery is low. Please don't remove the battery until you're ready to replace it with a new one immediately and never cover or remove the detector to silence the beeping.

Here are some useful tips for what you should and shouldn't do with your smoke detector:

Do:

- Clean dust away from the smoke detector with a vacuum cleaner or clean cloth, each time you test it
- Replace the battery regularly - your smoke alarm will beep intermittently to warn you when the battery is running low. But don't wait for that sound and replace the battery once a year
- If your detector is linked to the communal system and you think your detector might be faulty, report it to us at hello@hegartypm.co.uk or during office hours telephone 01604 953890
- If you own your home, you should replace your smoke alarm every 10 years as they can get clogged up with dust and dirt over time. If you rent your home, your Landlord is responsible for doing this.

Do not:

- Use cleaning sprays on or around your smoke detector as they may prevent it from working correctly.
- Remove the battery from your smoke alarm to use in another item, such as a toy or remote control. You may forget to replace it and put yourself and others in danger.

Useful Bedtime checks

You're more at risk from fire at night so it makes good sense to carry out a few quick and simple checks before you go to bed:

- Close before you doze! Make sure all inside doors are closed as this stops a fire from spreading from room to room.
- Turn off and unplug electrical appliances (unless of course they're designed to be left on, such as your fridge or freezer) This will also save money
- Check your cooker is turned off.
- Don't run washing machines, tumble dryers, dishwashers or other appliances overnight.
- Make sure you don't leave phones, laptops, toys, e-bikes or e-scooters charging overnight.
- If you have heaters, turn them off and put up fireguards.
- Put candles and cigarettes out properly, Smoking is NOT permitted in buildings.
- Make sure exits are kept clear.
- Keep door and window keys where everyone can find them.

Candles

- Make sure you put out any candles, incense and oil burners when you leave the room, and always before you go to bed
- Use firm, heat resistant holders and place them on flat, stable surfaces – this includes tea lights which can get very hot and burn through plastic surfaces, such as TVs or baths
- Keep them away from materials that may catch fire such as curtains, furniture and clothes
- To avoid accidents keep candles and other naked flames out of reach of children and pets – or, where possible, consider buying LED, battery-operated candles instead.

Carbon Monoxide

Carbon monoxide (CO) is known as a silent killer because you cannot taste, see or smell it, yet the fumes are highly poisonous and cause around 50 deaths and hundreds of injuries every year.

Poisoning from CO can happen in a matter of minutes or over an extended period of time – it depends on the amount of CO in the air. The symptoms include:

- Headaches
- Dizziness
- Nausea
- Breathlessness
- Collapsing
- Losing consciousness

Here are some of the warning signs to look out for:

- Symptoms only occur when you're in your home and disappear or get better when you leave
- Others in your home are experiencing similar symptoms (including your pets)
- Black, sooty marks on the front covers of gas fires
- Sooty or yellow/brown stains on or around boilers, stoves or fires
- If you get any symptoms when appliances are in use, e.g. when the boiler is on
- Increased condensation on the windows
- Pilot lights frequently blowing out
- Yellow instead of blue flames coming from gas appliances or the flames aren't fully formed (e.g. if the flame isn't all the way round on a gas hob burner).

What to do if you suspect CO poisoning:

- Open doors and windows to ventilate and let fresh air in
- If it's safe to do so, switch the gas appliance off
- Get outside into the fresh air as quickly as you can

- Get medical advice – e.g. contact your GP or go to hospital and tell them you suspect CO poisoning
- Before you return to your home it is very important to call the gas emergency number on 0800 111 999 and tell them what has happened
- Let us know too by contacting Hegarty by phone (01604 953890) or email hello@hegartypm.co.uk in office hours only

You can find more information about CO on the Health and Safety Executive website.

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/gas/domestic>

Balconies

Having access to a private outside space is such a bonus, especially when the weather is nice. If you have a balcony, please remember that it is part of a block and what you do or keep on it, does affect your neighbours. Here is advice from the London Fire Brigade that you should follow to keep you and your neighbours safe:

- Storing combustible items, such as furniture or white goods, is not allowed.
- BBQs are not permitted on balconies – they must only be used outside, well away from buildings.
- **Smoking is NOT permitted in the buildings and on balconies and it is against the law to do so.** It is very dangerous to smoke in the building or on a balcony - if you do smoke, you must put your cigarette out and dispose of it in an ashtray, and never throw it over the side.
- Screens or fencing made of bamboo or any other type of combustible material are not permitted.

BBQs

Nothing beats al fresco dining – and who doesn't love a BBQ! To make sure you keep yourselves and your neighbours safe, please follow these top BBQ tips:

1. BBQs on balconies are a **major fire risk and therefore not allowed**. You must only use them outside of your home.
2. Position your BBQ on level ground, well away from trees, fences, sheds or other structures.
3. Use firelighters to get your BBQ going – never use petrol, paraffin or any flammable liquids.
4. Keep a close eye on children (little ones can all too easily trip and fall, while older children might hurt themselves trying to help), and also pets, which can get under your feet and cause accidents.
5. If you're cooking, keep alcohol drinks to a minimum – or ideally keep off alcohol altogether.

BBQs can stay hot for hours, so be really careful moving them. They also give off carbon monoxide fumes for several hours after they go out, so do not bring them indoors with you.

Gas cylinder devices

Gas cylinder devices – including portable gas heaters, gas-fuelled barbecues and blow torches – pose the risk of fire or explosions.

We don't allow gas cylinder devices to be used or stored anywhere on our estates, including on balconies, in roof-top gardens, communal gardens and indoor communal areas.

If you have these items, please contact your local council to arrange for their disposal.

If you see a gas cylinder stored anywhere on a development where a block of flats/apartments is situated (does not include estate only) please report this to us at hello@hegartypm.co.uk or telephone 01604 953890.

Cooking

More fires and fire injuries are caused by carelessness in the kitchen than anywhere else in the home.

- If you have to leave the kitchen whilst you're cooking, pans should not be left unattended - the safest thing to do is switch off the hob and take pans off the heat until you come back in
- When you have finished cooking, double-check that everything is off – including the oven and hob. All hot surfaces should be clear
- Be careful of loose clothing when you cook and keep tea towels and dish cloths clear of the hob or cooker
- Over time, grease can build up in the oven, hob and extractor – keeping them clean will reduce the risk of fire
- Do not cook if you are feeling tired, have been drinking alcohol or are on medication that makes you feel drowsy
- If you use a toaster, make sure it is not directly below cupboards when in use.

The London Fire Brigade also has information about cooking safely on their website below.

<https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/safety/the-home/cooking/>

E-bikes and e-scooters

E-bikes and e-scooters are a popular means of getting around. However, the number of incidents, including fatal fires, that are caused by not storing or charging them properly, is unfortunately rising. That's why, if you use one and keep it at home, you need to follow these essential do's and don'ts:

- Do not store e-bikes or e-scooters near the entrance to your home or anywhere near a through route or escape route. If you have a garage or shed, store them there.
- The riskiest time for e-bike and e-scooter fires to take place is when you're charging their lithium batteries so it's vital that your battery and charger meet UK safety standards (see 'batteries' above for more useful advice) and you should only buy official ones from a reputable seller.
- Do not modify your battery or charger in any way – always follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- As soon as your e-bike or e-scooter is charged, unplug the charger. Never leave them charging overnight.
- Make sure there is a smoke alarm in the area where you charge your e-bike or e-scooter and test it regularly.
- Report direct to Hegarty if you see residents storing e-bikes or e-scooters in the communal areas email hello@hegartypm.co.uk or call 01604 953890

Batteries

Lithium batteries are used on e-scooters and e-bikes and they're one of the fastest growing causes of fires. If a fire starts, it spreads very quickly and it can be extremely difficult to escape from, which is why you must never block any exits with charging batteries, e-scooters or e-bikes. Please follow the links below to more advice on how to use and charge lithium batteries safely on the London Fire Brigade website:

<https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/safety/lithium-batteries/charging-electric-bike-and-electric-scooter-lithium-batteries/>

<https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/safety/lithium-batteries/electric-scooter-and-electric-bike-batteries-spotting-the-risks/>

<https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/safety/lithium-batteries/electric-bicycle-conversion-kits/>

Electrical equipment

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

The London Fire Brigade has a list of recalled faulty products on its website.

- Make sure all electrical appliances have a British or European safety mark when you buy them
- Keep electrical appliances clean and in good working order
- If you have a tumble dryer, empty fluff regularly in line with the manufacturer's instructions. You should also occasionally clean the extractor using a brush or gentle vacuuming.
- Hair straighteners get extremely hot so 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
- 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 have to 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.

Electrical blankets

Electric blankets are a cost-effective way to keep warm, but it's really important to use them safely.

1. Store your electric blanket flat, rolled up or loosely folded as this will prevent damaging the internal wiring.
2. Unplug your blanket before you get into bed, unless it has a thermostat control for safe all-night use.
3. Do not use an electric blanket if you have an air flow pressure relief mattress, or use emollient creams.

<https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/safety/carers-and-support-workers/specialist-health-equipment/>

<https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/safety/carers-and-support-workers/emollient-and-skin-creams/>

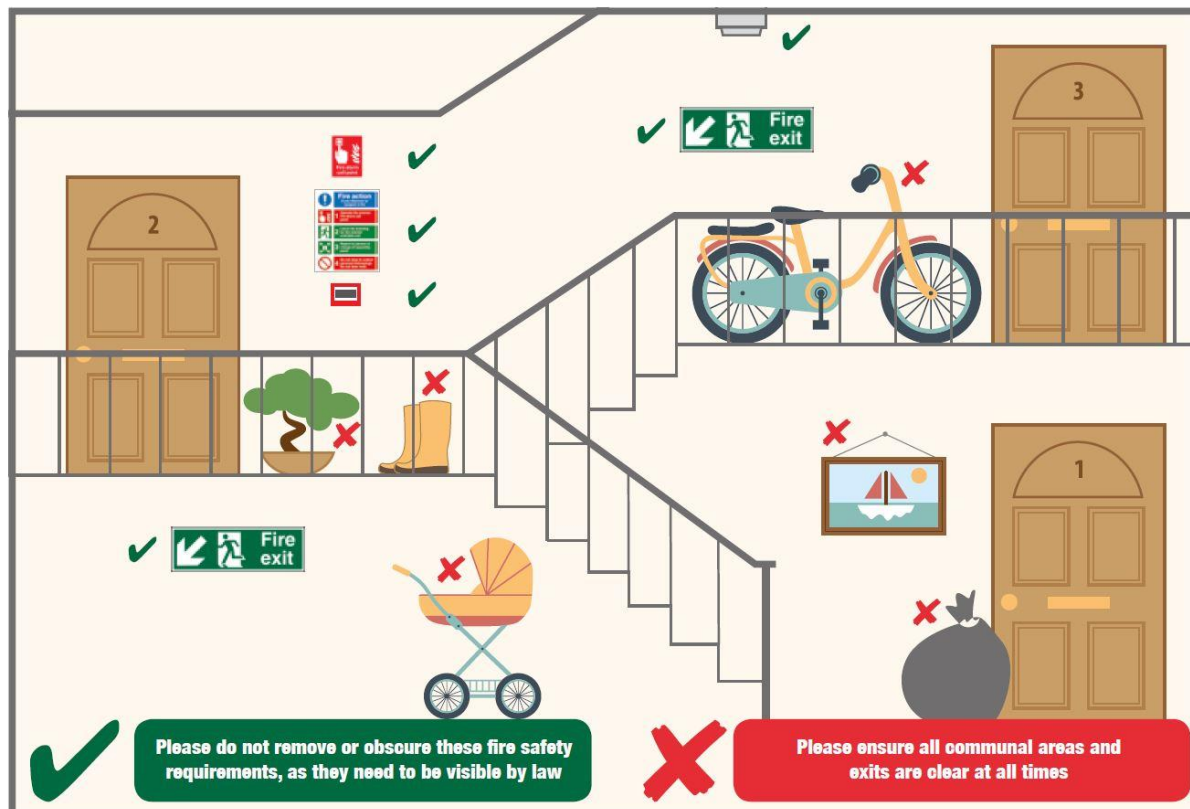
4. If your blanket gets wet, do not use it - and never switch it on to dry it.
5. Never buy second-hand electric blankets.
6. Check regularly for wear and tear and replace at least every 10 years.

Heaters

- If you use portable heaters, secure them against a wall to stop them falling over, or fit wall-mounted heaters
- Never use heaters for drying clothes on
- Keep heaters well away from curtains and furniture
- Don't sit too close to a heater – keep at least one metre away
- When you switch your heater off, let it cool down before moving it
- Paraffin, kerosene, or calor gas in portable gas heaters can be extremely dangerous as they can increase the risk of fire and explosion and also give off carbon monoxide, which can put your life and the lives of your neighbours at risk.

Escape routes: Make sure you have a plan

Make an escape plan and make sure everyone knows how to get out safely.



- Your best route is the way you normally go in and out of your home. However, there are likely to be several different ways you can get out in an emergency, so make sure you're familiar with all the alternatives in case your first option is affected or not safe to use.
- Remember that when you leave your flat, some of the smoke may follow you into the corridor. As stairways have fire doors and are usually enclosed and ventilated, aim to get to the nearest one as quickly as you can.
- If any doors or windows that form part of your escape route are lockable, keep keys nearby (whilst keeping security in mind) and make sure everyone knows where they are. A torch is also useful in case you need to get out at night.
- Make sure all parts of your route are kept clear of obstructions at all times and don't store items such as pushchairs, bikes or shoes as they are trip hazards.
- Most fire and rescue services offer free home visits and can provide advice and recommendations on escape routes. If you live in London, you can find out more or book a visit via the London Fire Brigade website <https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/safety/the-home/book-a-home-fire-safety-visit/>

If you live outside of London, you can search for a particular fire and rescue service <https://www.nationalfirechiefs.org.uk/fire-and-rescue-services> , in order to find their phone number and contact information to reach them.

- Practise walking the entire escape route regularly.
- Let us know at hello@hegartypm.co.uk or tel 01604 953890 if any part of your escape route is blocked or not accessible.

Evacuate, evacuation alert, and stay put strategies

If you live in a purpose-built block the strategy in case of a fire will be either to evacuate or stay put.

If you are not sure what the strategy is for your building, you will find details on the Fire Action Notice clearly displayed on the notice-board found in the communal area of your block. If in doubt, please contact us by email hello@hegartypm.co.uk or telephone 01604 953890.

Fire Action Notice

All of our buildings must, by law, display a Fire Action Notice to explain to residents and visitors what they need to do in the unlikely event of a fire. Below is a typical example of a Fire Action Notice.



They are located in the entrance of each building, usually on a communal notice board. Please make sure you take a look at the Fire Action Notice for your building. The information they provide includes details of whether the strategy for your building is to **'evacuate'** or **'stay put'**.

1. **'Evacuate'** - To evacuate. You should do this if the fire is in your flat, or there's a fire in another part of the building and you hear the alarm.
2. **'Stay put'** - If the fire is in another part of the building, you're usually safer staying inside your home. This is because each flat is built as a separate compartment which contains fire and stops it spreading. If the fire's inside your home or if you hear an alarm, you should get out.

Festive fire safety

Festive decorations really brighten up our homes during the dark winter days. But it's also important to make sure they're safe. Here are our top festive fire safety tips.

Christmas trees

If you opt for a live tree, remember that they can dry out and become a fire hazard, so make sure you:

- Keep it well-watered
- Place it away from heat sources
- Dispose of it after the festive period (check your council website to find out their tree collection dates)

Fairy lights

- Turn all the lights off before you go to bed and whenever you go out
- Be careful not to overload sockets with lots of plugs from multiple strings of lights
- Don't let the bulbs touch anything that can easily burn

Candles and tea lights

- Put your candles or tea lights in snug-fitting holders on heat resistant surfaces
- Make sure all candles are completely extinguished before you go to bed or if you go out
- Place them away from curtains and out of any draughts
- Make sure there's more than a metre between your candles or tea lights and any surface above
- Keep well out of reach of children and pets.

Paper chains and other decorations

- Make sure you keep any decorations well away from heaters, lights, candles and fireplaces.

Fireworks

Public displays are the safest way to enjoy fireworks and your council website will have details of any events in your area. If you want to let off fireworks at home, whether it's for Diwali, Bonfire Night, or New Year's Eve, please follow these top tips:

- Before you start, read the Fireworks Code:

<https://www.rosipa.com/Home-Safety/Advice/Fireworks-Safety>

- Never set off fireworks or start fires anywhere near your property, including in the garden or on balconies
- Only buy fireworks which carry the CE mark, keep them in a closed box and use them one at a time.
- Read and follow the instructions on each firework using a torch if necessary
- Light the firework at arm's length with a taper and stand well back
- Keep naked flames, including cigarettes, away from fireworks
- Never return to a firework once it has been lit
- Don't put fireworks in pockets and never throw them
- Direct any rocket fireworks well away from spectators
- Keep pets indoors; many are scared by the loud noises.
- Remind yourself of the fire and safety regulations for your building.
- In an emergency, phone 999 and ask for the fire service.

Want to find out more? Check out your local Fire Service website. To assist you, here is a link to the London Fire Brigade website.

<https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/safety/the-home/smoke-alarms-and-heat-alarms/>

Flat front doors

- Building Regulations state that the front door to a flat must be fire and smoke resistant. The minimum requirement is FD30S (FD = fire door, 30 = it provides 30 minutes fire and smoke resistance, and S = the door is also smoke sealed)
- They have self-closers which mean they automatically close behind you. This is really important if a fire were to break out as they hold the flames back and stop the fire and toxic smoke getting out into communal areas, escape routes and other flats in the block.
- Please **keep all Fire Doors Closed at all times** to contain fire, smoke and fumes.
- Under the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fire-safety-england-regulations-2022/fact-sheet-fire-doors-regulation-10>

we need to check all 'flat front doors' and self-closers in any sized building which have two or more flats. In buildings determined to be over 11metres high these must be checked every year, whether you rent your home or are an owner or leaseholder. We'll contact you to advise when these inspections will take place. It won't take long – just a few minutes - so please do make sure you give us access as properly functioning flat front doors play a vital role in keeping everyone safe in your building.

- Self-closing devices on doors **must never be tampered with**. If the self-closer on your front door doesn't work every time, or if your own flat front door is damaged in any way, please let us know. If you rent your property, your Landlord is responsible for fixing the door by instructing a qualified, experienced and insured contractor for this specific work, if it is a communal fire door Hegarty will make sure it's fixed.

This is to make sure that the doors provide you and your neighbours with protection if a fire were to break out

Report faults or damage immediately to hello@hegartypm.co.uk or tel: 01604 953890

Smoking

The fires caused by smoking (including cigarettes, vapes, roll-ups, cigars and pipes) result in more deaths than any other type of fire. **Smoking is strictly prohibited in our buildings and is against the law to do so.**

- If you smoke, please make sure cigarettes are put out completely and disposed of properly
- It's safer to smoke outside but, if you have a balcony, do not throw cigarettes, etc over the side
- If you do smoke indoors, never smoke in bed

- If you're feeling tired, don't smoke in armchairs and sofas don't balance lit cigarettes on the edge of an ashtray or anything else.
- Run water on your ashtray before you empty it
- Take extra care when you're tired, taking prescription drugs or if you've been drinking alcohol
- Don't leave lit pipes or cigarettes unattended
- If you use a vape, only use the charger that came with it - check the battery for damage, buy from a reputable seller, and do not leave it charging for extended periods. Do not leave on charge whilst asleep.

Fire safety in your building

Communal areas

It is essential that all communal areas, including corridors, walkways and stairwells are kept completely clear of all items and belongings, including bikes, buggies, scooters, plant pots, shoes, rubbish and door mats. This is because they:

- Increase the risk of fire
- obstruct and slow down the emergency services – the longer it takes firefighters to gain access, the more out of control fires become, which puts their lives at even greater risk.
- If your building has an evacuate policy, or if a fire occurs and the Fire Service tell you to get out, items in communal areas will also slow you and your neighbours down from getting to safety.
- If you find any items or rubbish in communal areas, please make attempts to dispose of it initially and/or please contact us on 01604 953890.

Communal service cupboards

There are a number of cupboards in blocks of flats to access gas, water or electrical services. These are not storage cupboards and should be kept locked; residents must not use them to store items as it increases the risk of fire starting and spreading. If you notice a cupboard that has a damaged or open door or is full of items, please contact us as soon as possible.

If you find rubbish or anything blocking communal areas or fire escapes, please contact us on hello@hegartypm.co.uk or tel: 01604 953890

Fire doors

The Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 report noted that “Fire doors play an essential role in preventing or inhibiting the spread of smoke and toxic gases and in preserving the effective compartmentation of buildings.”

- The communal doors throughout your building are there to prevent fire and smoke from spreading. **It is therefore vital that they are never propped open.**
- If you see a fire door that is propped open, **please close it immediately.**
- We regularly check communal fire doors: under the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022, the regularity is dependent upon the determined height of your building. If your building is determined to be over 11m in height these checks must be made quarterly.
- If you come across any door in your building that is damaged please report it to us as soon as possible at hello@hegartypm.co.uk or tel: 01604 953890.
- If you live in a flat, please also see the ‘Flat front doors’ in the section above.

Useful information, advice and tips from the London Fire Brigade

The London Fire Brigade also has lots of tips to keep you and your household safe wherever in the Country you may live.

If you’d like to have tailored fire safety advice for your own home, or for someone else, we recommend you take a look at their home fire safety checker. This online tool allows you to carry out a thorough check of your home in only a few minutes. It’s simple and practical – giving you specific advice for your family and your home.

Alternatively, you might like to arrange a free home safety visit. Fire and Rescue Services across the Country carry out thousands of these home visits every year, providing personalised advice about fire safety. You can find out more by contacting your local Fire and Rescue Service.

To find out your local Fire and Rescue Service:

<https://www.nationalfirechiefs.org.uk/fire-and-rescue-services>

If you live in London:

<https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/safety/the-home/>

<https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/safety/the-home/home-fire-safety-visits/>

<https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/safety/the-home/home-fire-safety/home-fire-safety-checker-hfsc>