

Housing and environment

# Fire Safety Guide

For private tenants



# Electrical safety at home

It is vital to look after your electrical equipment. Electric shocks and fires caused by electrical faults are a major cause of injury and can be fatal.

## Simple checks can save your life

### Cables

- check cables for damage - there should not be any cuts or frays
- be careful not to overload extension cables
- make sure extension cables are fully uncoiled whilst using
- do not daisy chain extension cables

### Plugs

- plugs should fit tightly into sockets
- plug casings should not be cracked or chipped
- do not use a plug if it has burn marks or signs of damage

### Sockets

- check sockets for burn marks and signs of overheating
- make sure sockets are properly secured to the wall and not loose
- make sure the socket switches work properly

### Chargers

Different devices require different levels of charge. Branded chargers are specifically designed for a particular device. Fake chargers are often made with poor quality components that fail to meet UK safety regulations.

Fake chargers run the risk of putting too much energy into a device, causing the battery to overheat. This means they can cause injury, electric shocks, and even fires.

## Top tips for electrical safety

- make sure your electrical appliances have a British or European safety mark
- regularly empty fluff and lint from tumble dryers
- switch off appliances when not in use
- hair dryers and straighteners can get extremely hot – leave them to cool on a heatproof surface after use
- do not use an extension lead for high powered appliances like washing machines
- remember that water and electricity are a deadly mix – do not use mains-powered appliances like hairdryers, straighteners, or radios in the bathroom
- regularly clean your oven and hob to avoid a build up of food debris which poses a fire risk
- check your family members chargers and electrical equipment regularly to make sure it is in good condition



**Your landlord must ensure that the electrical installation in your property is checked every 5 years by a person who is qualified and competent. Just because an appliance or socket works does not mean it is safe to use.**





# Charging electric bikes, electric scooters, and mobility scooters

## E-bikes and e-scooters can pose safety risks if used and charged incorrectly.

If you own an e-bike, e-scooter, or mobility scooter, always follow the guidance for charging safely as most fires occur whilst charging. Charge batteries on a hard, flat surface. Store your e-bike or e-scooter in your property on a flat, non-flammable surface near a smoke or heat alarm.



**E-bikes, e-scooters, and mobility scooters must be stored and charged in your home and not in communal areas. They should never block an emergency exit.**

## Top tips for keeping safe whilst charging e-bikes, e-scooters, and mobility scooters at home

- always follow manufacturers' instructions when charging
- never leave the device unattended whilst charging
- only charge your device when you are at home and awake – do not charge when you are asleep
- always unplug your charger once it has finished charging your device
- always use a charger approved by the product manufacturer and buy an official one from a reputable seller
- be cautious buying batteries from online marketplaces as they may not meet the correct safety standards
- do not attempt to modify or tamper with the battery. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions
- check the battery for damage before charging. If there is any damage, do not use it
- do not dispose of lithium-ion batteries in general household or recycling waste. Batteries can be taken to your [re-use and recycling centre](#)
- do not use electrical power points in communal areas to charge any personal items



**Make sure you have home contents insurance. If there is a fire in your home and your belongings are lost or damaged, it is your responsibility to replace them.**



## Smoke alarms

London Fire Brigade recommend you test your smoke alarms once a month. You can do this yourself by holding the button on the alarm for up to 5 seconds.



**Your landlord must ensure that smoke alarms are maintained in good working order, and in particular at the start of each tenancy.**

If your smoke alarm goes off by mistake, wait for it to stop. Do not take out the batteries or cover the smoke alarm – it is in place for your safety. Most fire alarms are now designed so the battery cannot be removed, please do not attempt to remove it as this will damage the detector.



**If you find that your alarm is not working, please contact your landlord immediately. There should be one working smoke detector on every floor of your home, and a carbon monoxide detector in any room where there is a gas appliance.**

## Top tips for keeping safe at home

Fires are more likely to start at home than anywhere else. Here are some useful tips that you can use to ensure your home and communal areas of your building stay as safe as possible.

### In the kitchen

- when using the hob, keep your saucepan handles turned in so they do not get knocked off. If you need to leave the room, take your pans off the heat
- keep tea towels and cloths away from your cooker and be careful if you are wearing loose clothing
- if you are cooking with oil and it catches fire, never use water on it as it will cause a fireball. If you can, turn off the heat and cover the pan with a lid or damp towel
- switch off all non-essential appliances at night and when you are not at home
- keep your oven, oven hood filters, and hob clean and free of grease and food debris as this can quickly ignite and cause a fire





# Fire safety at home

## Keeping children safe

- do not let children play with electrical items
- use plug guards in electrical sockets and unplug appliances that children could trip over
- keep matches, lighters, and candles out of sight and reach of children
- always use a childproof fire guard, and do not let children play or leave toys near a fire or heater
- take care when cooking - never leave children alone in the kitchen
- make sure your evacuation route is clear of any toys or pushchairs which may block it
- keep doors closed at night
- discuss the importance of fire safety with your children



**Never put yourself at any risk and if in doubt, get out.**



## Using portable heaters safely

- do not put anything on top of heaters and never use it to dry your clothes
- keep your heater away from bedding, curtains, and furniture
- never leave your heater unattended whilst in use or when you are asleep
- never power a heater from an extension lead
- do not leave young children or pets unattended in areas where portable heaters are switched on
- keep portable heaters in a safe place, both when they are being used and when they are being stored

## Cigarettes

- do not smoke in your property - always find an outside space away from the stairwells or building to smoke. Never smoke in bed
- do not leave lit cigarettes, cigars, or pipes lying around
- stub cigarettes out properly, ensuring they are fully extinguished and disposed of appropriately
- keep matches and lighters out of reach of children



# Buildings with multiple flats

## Communal areas

If you live in a building with multiple flats, communal areas including entrances, stairwells, corridors, landings, and service cupboards must be kept clear of personal belongings.

In the event of a fire, items in communal areas can fuel a fire, block important escape routes, and obstruct firefighter access to emergency equipment.



Follow London Fire Brigade guidance by clearing any items that you may have outside your home, in communal areas, or in service cupboards, including:

- bikes including e-bikes
- pushchairs
- mobility scooters or e-scooters
- shoes or shoe racks
- plants and other decorations including picture frames, posters, Christmas or other religious decorations
- furniture, including white goods
- household rubbish
- laundry
- candles or candle holders
- doormats



**Highly flammable items like barbeques, gas cylinders, petrol, diesel, or oil cans must not be stored anywhere in buildings with multiple flats or units of accommodation.**

## Know your emergency plan

If you live in a building with multiple flats, make sure you know your buildings evacuation policy. You can find Fire Action Notices by the main entrances and exits of the building telling you what to do in the event of a fire.



## If a fire breaks out in your home

No matter what the evacuation policy is for your building, if there is a fire in your home, you must leave immediately and call the fire service.

- leave the room where the fire is straight away and close the door behind you. Do not attempt to put the fire out
- tell everyone in your flat to leave. Do not stop to collect personal belongings
- close your flat entrance door behind you
- leave the building by following the emergency exit
- signage
- keep a safe distance away from the building and dial 999 for the fire service. Emergency service calls are free of charge
- give your full address to the fire service. Do not end the call until the fire service has repeated the address correctly. You may also need to give your telephone number
- do not assume someone else has called 999. If you see a fire, make the call



# Balcony safety

If you have a balcony and a fire breaks out, it could spread much faster than a fire inside your building. This is because inside buildings there are walls and doors that help to contain fires, as well as a more limited supply of oxygen to keep the fire burning. Outside on your balcony, a fire can quickly be blown by the wind, spreading it upwards and outwards and putting flats around you at risk.

Generally, the less you have on your balcony the more fire safe you will be.

## Tips to keep your balcony safe

- keeping your balcony clear of rubbish will help prevent the starting and spreading of fires
- do not dispose of rubbish or cigarettes by flicking them over the side of your balcony.

## What is NOT allowed on your balcony?

- flammable items like timber, paint, gas cylinders, petrol, diesel or oil cans
- fireworks
- outdoor gas or electric patio heaters or a flame pits
- barbeques must not be used on balconies as falling embers can burn items on your balcony and other balconies around you
- white goods and electrical goods such as fridges or tumble driers are not designed for outdoor use and could easily start a devastating fire
- reed fencing or other combustible screening



# Fire doors

Fire doors are one of the most important measures to keep you safe. They create a barrier from fire and smoke to prevent them from travelling through a building.

Controlling the spread of fire and smoke is vital to allow residents to evacuate or stay put as instructed and enable safe access for the fire brigade.

It is important that you know what fire doors should look like and how they are meant to function so you can report anything to your landlord that is not right. Fire doors only work if installed correctly and if important parts are intact and performing as they should.

## Where will I see fire doors in my building?

If you live in a building with multiple flats, you will find fire doors in stairwells, corridors, and anywhere there is a risk of combustion, like electricity service cupboards and riser cupboards. Fire doors in common areas around the building will have blue signage showing they are fire doors.

## What about my front door?

If you live in a building with multiple flats, it is likely your flat entrance door is also a fire door. Flat entrance doors face onto a means of escape. It is vital that flat entrance doors are regularly inspected and maintained to make sure they work properly if a fire breaks out. Flat entrance doors should never be adapted or replaced.

Please note that fire doors are not required where the door opens directly onto a street.

## How do I know a fire door is safe?

Here are some important things to look out for to be confident that a fire door will work properly in the event of a fire.

### Door closers

Make sure the door closes firmly onto the latch without sticking. Doors should open and close easily.

- ? WHY? A fire door only works when it is closed. If a self-closing device is damaged or disengaged, the door might not work when it is needed.

### Seals

Make sure there are intumescent seals around the door or frame and that they are in good condition.

- ? WHY? Seals will trap the smoke and stop fire travelling around the door.

### Hinges

Check there are 3 hinges on the door with no loose or missing screws.

- ? WHY? Hinges should hold the weight of the door. Only a properly fitted door will help prevent the spread of fire and smoke.

### Gaps

Fire doors should fit snugly in their frames. Gaps must be less than 4mm on the sides and at the top and up to 8mm below the door.

- ? WHY? Smoke and fire can travel through gaps.

### Glass panels

If there are doors with glass panels they should be in good condition with no cracks or missing glass.

- ? WHY? Broken or missing glass impacts the integrity of the door.

### Letterboxes

Letterboxes should be made of a solid metal or certified fire-resistant material. They should not be made of aluminium. Solid metals will be magnetic whereas aluminium will not be.

- ? WHY? Broken or damaged letterplates impact the integrity of the door.



## Gas safety checks

Your landlord is legally required to make sure that all gas appliances in your home are checked once a year and are safe to use.



**You must allow access for your landlord's contractors to complete the gas and electric safety checks.**

## Why are gas safety checks important?

Unchecked properties risk a gas explosion or carbon monoxide poisoning.

You could be at risk of carbon monoxide poisoning if:

- an appliance is faulty or not properly installed
- a room containing a gas appliance is poorly ventilated
- chimneys or flues become blocked

If your home has a carbon monoxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) alarm, remember to test it weekly so you know the sound.

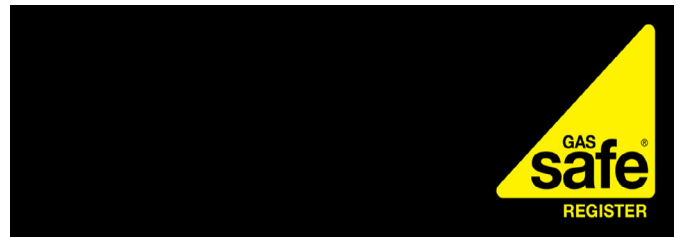
## What to do if you smell gas

If you smell gas or suspect a leak you should immediately:

1. put out all naked flames such as candles
2. do not turn electrical appliances or switches on or off
3. open all doors and windows
4. switch off your gas supply by pulling the gas lever down. This should be located next to or near your gas meter
5. leave the property and call the National Grid on 0800 111 999

## The Gas Safe Register

By law, all gas engineers must be on the Gas Safe Register.





## Reporting property conditions

Please ensure that you have contacted your landlord before contacting us, to give them an opportunity to resolve the issue first.

If your landlord does not carry out the repair, please contact us at [propertyregulation@ealing.gov.uk](mailto:propertyregulation@ealing.gov.uk)

Please provide us with the following:

1. Your name, address and contact number
2. Your landlords name and contact details (number and address, if known)
3. How many people in your household, and whether your home is occupied as a single-family household or as a house in multiple occupation
4. A copy of your latest tenancy agreement (if possible)



## London Fire Brigade

Call 999 in the event of a fire  
[www.london-fire.gov.uk](http://www.london-fire.gov.uk)

## Gas emergencies

Contact the National Gas Emergency Service at 0800 111 999 (or via textphone at 0800 371 787).



## More information

[www.ealing.gov.uk/prslicensing](http://www.ealing.gov.uk/prslicensing)