

Now that the colder weather is approaching we need to be more aware of fire safety within our homes.

Millions of dollars in property and possessions go up in smoke each year. The emotional cost is much more, so don't let this happen to you. Make your home and family fire safe.



Learn the fire safety basics

- Working smoke alarms save lives. If you haven't already, install smoke alarms and test them regularly. If you can only afford to buy one smoke alarm at a time, install it in the hallway, closest to the bedrooms. Smoke alarm batteries should be replaced every year, so now is the time to replace them in existing alarms.
- Make an escape plan. Drawing up an escape plan and practising it with your family WILL make all the difference in an emergency. Work out two escape routes for every room, this may include windows. Make sure all doors and windows that are needed for escape are clear and can be opened easily. If everyone in your household is familiar with your escape plan, then they will instinctively know what to do rather than panic.
- Get out and stay out! In a fire, get everybody out and call 111. And whatever you do, stay out.

Tips for Making Your Home Safe

Cooking

- Never leave cooking unattended, this is the leading cause of house fires.
- Never throw water on a fry pan that's on fire, use a pot lid or a large flat object to place over the pan.
- If you've been drinking don't attempt to have a fry up!
- Keep curtains, tea towels, oven mitts and anything flammable well away from the cooking area.

Home Heating

- Keep everything at least one metre away from a heater or fireplace.
- Open fires should be screened with a proper fireguard and never left unattended.

Smoking

- If you are tired, taking medication or have had a lot of alcohol, avoid smoking! If you fall asleep with a cigarette still alight it could start a fire.
- Ensure that all cigarettes and matches have been properly extinguished before you leave a room.
- Ideally, confine smoking to outdoors.

Electrical Safety

- Do not overload any power sockets with double adapters.
- If you are concerned about any electrical appliances have them checked by a qualified electrician.
- Electric blankets should always be flat on the bed, and cords should not be twisted or caught between the mattress and base. Twisted cords are the biggest cause of electric blanket fires. If your blanket is more than 10 years old, replace it with a new model.

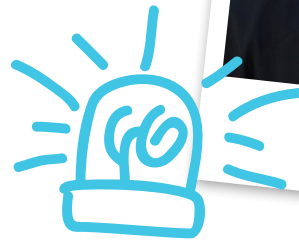
Fire Safety

Here is a useful checklist from the NZ Fire Service to ensure you have ticked all the boxes for keeping your home fire safe.

Bedroom	Covered
Working smoke alarms fitted on the ceiling - Recommend Photoelectric	
Candles kept away from curtains and in a proper holder	
Never have candles in a child's bedroom	
Electric blankets turned off before going to bed	
Clothing, bedding and furniture kept at least a metre from the heater	

Kitchen	Covered
Leaving cooking unattended is dangerous	
Know what to do if a frypan catches fire	
Understand the dangers of drinking and frying	
Non-essential electrical appliances turned off before bed or work	
Powerpoints or multiboards aren't overloaded	
Benefits of fire extinguishers or fire blankets	
Dangers of children being in the kitchen while cooking	
Saucepan handles turned towards the back of the stove	
Jug cords kept away from the edge of the bench	

Hallway	Covered
Working smoke alarm fitted on the ceiling - install long-life	
Escape route clear	
Keys kept in deadlocks at night	



Family	Covered
Carry out a night time safety check	
Close doors before going to bed	
Regularly test smoke alarms to ensure they work	
Sparkguard around open fire	
Practice escape plan	
Know where the safe meeting place is	
Know to call 111 in any emergency	

Living Room	Covered
Working smoke alarms fitted on ceiling - Recommend Photoelectric	
Candles kept away from curtains and in a proper holder	
Matches and lighters kept away from children	
Sparkguard around open fire	
Chimney swept annually	
Hot ashes removed in a metal container	
Clothing, bedding and furniture kept a metre from the heater	
Appliances with remotes should be switched off at the appliance before bed or work	