

Fire Safety

Fire safety is everyone's responsibility and we all need to do our bit to keep each other safe.

It is important everyone understands the fire safety procedures, especially in blocks of flats where it is very important to always keep corridors and walkways free of obstructions.

General advice

- Remember to check your smoke alarm at least once a month
- Familiarise yourself with your building
- Some blocks where residents live may have slightly different advice so it is very important that you know the advice for your building. Make sure that everyone in your home knows where the exits are should they be required in the event of an emergency.
- Close all internal doors when you go to bed.
- Take care in the kitchen, never leave your cooking unattended and take extra care with hot oil.
- Never leave lit candles unattended.
- Make sure cigarettes are stubbed out and disposed of carefully and never smoke in bed.
- Don't overload electrical sockets.
- Keep matches away from children.
- Do not store flammable liquids such as petrol in your home, bin store or chutes.
- If you require oxygen to assist a medical condition, please ensure you have informed your local fire and rescue.

Smoke alarms

The easiest way to protect your home and family from the early onset of fire is with a smoke alarm. You may need more than one and should test them at least monthly to make sure they are working. It could save your life.

Fire safety features in your home and making modifications

Did you know that your front door is your main weapon against fire? If you live in a flat your front door helps to prevent fire from spreading into communal areas and escape routes - all front doors in blocks of flats should be fire resistant because they help to prevent fire from spreading.

In flats, current fire safety guidance says that front doors should have a self-closing device so this should never be removed. You must also be aware that altering your letterbox or adding a cat flap to your door will affect the fire safety of your home and the entire building - even minor alterations can compromise the design of the building's fire safety systems.

If you have a fire-resistant door in your home you must first seek written permission if you wish to make alterations to it so that Saha can properly assess the fire safety implications. If your door or letterbox has been damaged, please report it to Customer Services for inspection and repair.

Your home has been designed with fire safety in mind so there are various things such as signage, smoke alarms, heat detectors, door closers, fire resistant glazing, fire resistant panels, sprinklers, automatic opening vents on some stairways and other fire safety features that help to keep you safe. Everyone's safety depends on these safety features, so please do not remove or damage them, for example by drilling holes through walls, e.g. to install cables.

If you spot any damage that could impact fire safety, such as broken smoke alarms, heat detectors and door closers within your property or communal areas in your block please call Customer Services on 0800 970 6363.

Over half of home fires are caused by cooking accidents. There are a number of things you can do to help prevent a fire in your kitchen:

- Take pans off the heat or turn them down if you must leave the kitchen whilst cooking and make sure you turn the cooker off when you have finished.
- Take care if you're wearing loose clothing as it can easily catch fire.
- Keep tea towels and cloths away from the hob.
- Keep the oven, hob and grill clean and in good working order. A build-up of fat and grease can ignite a fire.
- Take special care when deep fat frying. If the oil starts to smoke it is too hot and could catch fire. Turn off the heat and leave it to cool.

If a fire breaks out in your home or flat

- Leave the room where the fire is straight away and close the door.
- Tell everyone in your home to leave immediately.
- Close the front door.
- Do not stay behind to put the fire out.
- If you live in a block where there is a lift - do not use it.
- Call the fire service - dial 999.
- Wait outside for the emergency services, away from the building.

If you live in a block of flats

New build blocks of flats are designed to restrict the spread of smoke and fire so evacuation advice is different. It is usually safe for you to stay in your flat if a fire breaks out elsewhere. Please note that there are some blocks where residents are advised to evacuate immediately - it is very important that you understand the fire evacuation advice for where you live.

If a fire breaks out in another part of your block of flats and your property has a Stay-Put policy:

- Stay put, unless you are directly affected by heat or smoke and/or until the fire service says it's safe to leave.
- Call the Fire Service on 999 and let them know where you are so they can find you.
- You should only leave immediately if smoke or heat affects your home or if you are told to by the fire service.
- If you leave, close the front door.
- Use the nearest fire escape - if there is a lift do not use it.
- Wait outside away from the building.

Obstructions in corridors and on balconies

- Bicycles, pushchairs etc. must not be left in the corridor
- Door mats are not allowed
- Small items left in the corridor e.g. on window sills must be made of materials that would not burn easily, e.g. metal, ceramic, porcelain. They must not cause an obstruction or hazard of any type (if they do, they will be removed)
- Permanent or heavy furniture and constructions are not allowed on balconies;
- Fixed washing lines are not allowed on balconies
- Hazardous items including plastic storage sheds are not be allowed.
- Balconies should not be used to store large amounts of items and must never be used to store flammable material.
- Chairs and furniture that can be moved easily, portable clothes dryers etc. are allowed

Naked Flames

More than five fires a day are started by candles and every three days someone dies from a fire caused by a cigarette. To help prevent a fire, never leave burning candles unattended and never leave matches or lighters where children can find them. Make sure your ashtray or candle holder can't tip over and never smoke when you are in bed!

Electrical safety

Faulty electrics (appliances, wiring and overloaded sockets) cause around 7,000 house fires across the country every year. Here are some things to help you avoid an electrical fire:

- Make sure all electrical appliances have a British or European safety mark when you buy them
- Don't buy cheap, counterfeit chargers for items with Lithium batteries
- Never overload adaptors with too many plugs.
- Unplug appliances that are not in use, especially heaters and irons.
- Keep a look out for signs of dangerous or loose wiring such as scorch marks, hot plugs and sockets, fuses that blow or circuit-breakers that trip for no obvious reasons, or flickering lights.
- Remember to check hidden cables and leads, e.g. behind furniture or under carpets and mats. Replace any that are worn.
- Never cover electric heaters with washing.
- Always check that you use the right fuse in plugs and the recommended bulb wattage in light fittings to prevent overheating.