



Extreme weather

Winter

Winter weather can bring lots of different hazards, from increased risk of fire in the home to events such as flooding, ice and snowy conditions.

Cold temperatures can also impact on our health especially the young and those who are older, disabled or vulnerable.

Be prepared – follow our top winter tips to help you stay safe and well.

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Winter Home Fire Safety

When the temperature drops, we know that fire risk increases and if you become poorly or unwell your ability to escape or react to a fire may also be affected.

SAFER HEATING

Follow our top tips to stay safe and warm.

- Keep heaters (including any that are portable) at least one metre away from anything that could catch alight.
- If you have a solid fuel (log or coal) burner or an open fire, use a fire guard.
- People with impaired mobility may be at increased risk of tripping or falling onto a heater or fire.
- Watch out for children and pets – supervise them carefully.
- Gas fires and boiler systems should be checked annually by a Gas Safe professional.
- Do not use any type of BBQ inside your home. They are a serious fire and CO poisoning risk.
- Have your chimney swept by a competent professional – at least once a year.



REMEMBER!

Cost of living increases affect everyone. If you are having difficulty with energy bills contact your energy supplier – they have a responsibility to help customers who are struggling or in debt to them.

If you are of state pension age visit age UK to check you are getting the right benefits. Go to: www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/



ELECTRIC BLANKETS

Electric blankets are a cost effective way to keep warm and cosy at night. They are safe to use but you should always follow the manufacturer's instructions.

- Unplug blankets before you get into bed unless it has a thermostat control for safe all-night use.
- Never use an electric blanket if you have an air flow pressure relief mattress, or use emollient creams.
- Never use a hot water bottle at the same time as using your electric blanket.
- Do not buy second-hand electric blankets.
- Store electric blankets flat, rolled up or loosely folded to prevent damaging the internal wiring.
- Remember to check regularly for wear and tear and replace at least every 10 years. Your electrical blanket should be replaced if:
 - The fabric is worn or frayed.
 - Scorch marks are visible, or wires are poking through the fabric.
 - There is any damage to the electrical cord.

IN THE EVENT OF A POWER CUT

- If you do use candles, take extra care. Always put them out before leaving the room or going to bed.
- Keep a fully charged torch handy.

ENJOY THE FESTIVE SEASON SAFELY



- Make sure to check the condition of your lights before putting them up.
- Buy your festive lights from a trusted retailer.
- Do not use multiple extension leads or overload power sockets.
- Switch off festive lights when you're not at home or overnight.
- Be careful not to overload an extension lead – some appliances use more power than others.

LITHIUM BATTERIES

Lithium batteries power millions of devices every day but it is still important to follow the manufacturer's safety instructions especially during freezing weather conditions.

- Visit our battery advice pages on our website, go to: www.london-fire.gov.uk/safety/the-home/electrical-items/batteries-and-chargers/
- Gifting an e-bike or e-scooter? For safety information, scan the QR code below to see our #ChargeSafe campaign.



CARBON MONOXIDE



During winter, the risk of Carbon Monoxide (CO) poisoning increases as we use more indoor heaters, gas appliances and solid fuel burners. CO has no smell or taste and exposure to high-level short-term or long-term low levels can be deadly.

How to recognise symptoms of CO poisoning



Headaches



Dizziness



Nausea



Breathlessness



Collapse



Loss of consciousness

What to do if you suspect CO poisoning

- Leave the property immediately.
- Seek medical attention as a priority,
- Before returning to your home; call the Gas Emergency number for safety advice on: 0800 111 999 (even if the suspected source is not a gas appliance/boiler).

REMEMBER!

If symptoms only occur when you, your family, visitors, or pets are at home and disappear or get better when you leave, it could be due to CO poisoning.

Prevention

CO poisoning is preventable, follow these important steps to keep you and others safe.

- Place CO alarms in all rooms where there is a solid fuel burning appliance e.g. gas cooker, boiler, a solid fuel burner or open fire.
- Ensure all fuel burning appliances are serviced regularly by a Gas Safe engineer.
- Most CO alarms are portable; take yours when visiting family and friends.
- Ventilation is important – keep flues and ventilation bricks clean and clear.

SMOKE ALARMS



Having friends or family around? Keep everyone safe and press the test button! Test your alarms regularly.

It only takes a moment to be certain that all of your alarms are working.

Watch out for neighbours. If you hear a smoke alarm sounding, it's ok to take action and call 999, it could save a life.

CANDLES, INCENSE AND OIL BURNERS



A naked flame needs to be handled with care and never left unattended.

- Never use candles as an alternative heat source in the winter.
- Candles, tea lights, oil lamps (including Diya's), wax melts and incense should be placed in stable, heat-resistant holders.
- Keep them away from anything that may catch fire such as curtains, furniture, papers and clothes.
- Do not put candles on or near a Christmas tree.
- Flameless LED candles can be a safer alternative to tea lights.

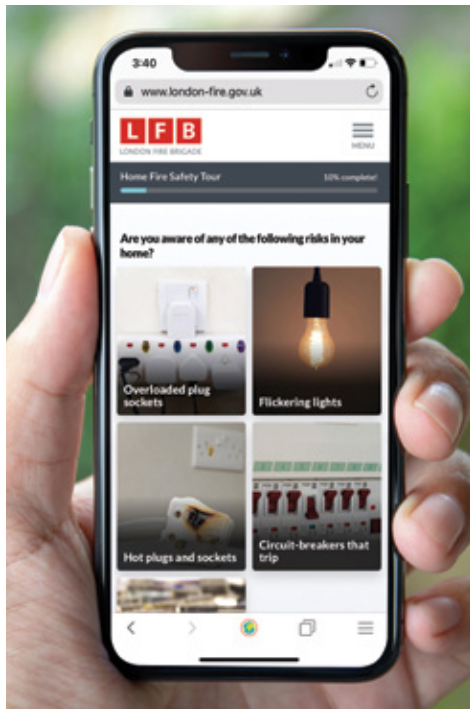
OUT AND ABOUT – STAYING SAFE AND WELL

- Rain, ice and leaves can make paths and roads slippery, take extra care when you go out to avoid slips and falls:
 - Wear waterproof non-slip shoes.
 - Remember to wrap up well – extra layers can help keep you warmer.
 - Use salt or sand to clear paths – not water, it may refreeze and turn to black ice.

Cold weather can make existing health problems worse especially for older people. For more advice visit:

www.metoffice.gov.uk/weather/warnings-and-advice/seasonal-advice/cold-weather-alerts

HOME FIRE SAFETY CHECKER



If you are concerned about any risks of fire in your property, our online Home Fire Safety Checker can help you. It will assess your level of risk and suggest fire safety actions that are right for you.

This could be booking a home visit with one of our crews or providing you with online advice that suits your needs.



Check your fire risk today – we'll get you the right help.

Scan this QR code or call us on **0800 028 4428**.



FLOODING



Floods can be dangerous and put lives at risk. They can also cause power outages and widespread damage to homes and roads. It's important to know what actions you can take.

Be prepared

- Keep an eye on local weather reports and sign up for flood alerts. www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings
- Put an emergency grab bag together. Include medication, important documents e.g. insurance documents, clothes and toiletries.
- If you have vulnerable neighbours, make sure they know what to do in an emergency.
- Do not park in an underground car park if flooding is forecast.
- Save the **Floodline** number (0345 988 1188) to your phone, report flooding in your area, or ask for advice if your home is flooded.

During a flood

- Avoid non-essential travel.
- If you are in immediate danger, call 999 and follow the advice of the operator.
- If the emergency services ask you to evacuate the area – do so.

After a flood

- Floodwater can be hazardous, wear rubber boots and gloves in and around the affected property.
- Don't turn on your electricity until it has been checked.
- For information on what to do after a flood, go to: www.london-fire.gov.uk/safety/flooding/flooding-advice/after-a-flood/

Did you know? Six inches of fast-moving water can knock over an adult, and two feet of water can move a car. **Do not drive through floodwater.**



Drowning in the UK is one of the leading causes of accidental death. Cold water shock can kill in minutes – follow our winter water safety advice.

In wet or icy conditions take care when walking or running near waterways, especially on pathways and banks as they may be slippery.

If you get into difficulty:

- Don't panic – stay calm and float, keeping your head above water, try to breathe normally.
- The initial effects of cold-water shock will pass so don't try to swim straight away.
- Use or hold onto anything that can help you stay afloat.
- Call for help – swim to safety if you are able.

Take a look at the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) 'Float to Live' video for more information at: <https://rnli.org/safety/float>

WATER SAFETY (continued)

If someone else or a pet is in difficulty:

- DO NOT GO IN AFTER THEM.
- Call 999.
- Give the location – look for landmarks, throwline boards or signs.
- If someone is in difficulty, keep talking to them, encouraging them to stay calm and to keep their head above water.
- If it's a dog – encourage it to swim back to you.
- If you lose sight of them keep your eyes on the spot where you last saw them and tell the emergency services when they arrive.



Think before you drink

- Watch out for your friends if they have been drinking – stick together.
- Try to avoid routes that take you near to water, especially in the dark. You could slip and fall in.

LFB supports #DontDrinkandDrown
www.rlss.org.uk/pages/category/dont-drink-and-drown



Never go onto any type of frozen water. When walking nearby, always keep away from the edge and keep dogs on a lead.

What to do if you fall through the ice:

- Keep calm and shout for help.
- Spread your arms across the surface of the ice in front of you.
- If the ice is strong enough, kick your legs to slide onto the ice.
- If you can get out of the water, roll away to prevent further cracks, lie flat and pull yourself across the ice to the bank.
- If you cannot climb out, keep as still as possible with your head clear of the water and wait for help to arrive.
- Once out, seek medical attention immediately.

What to do if someone else or a pet falls through the ice:

- DO NOT GO ONTO THE ICE OR IN THE WATER if you see a person or animal in difficulty.
- Call 999 and give the exact location.
- Stay on the bank and shout to the person to 'Keep still, hold your head above the water'.
- Offer reassurance to keep them calm.
- Don't be tempted to go into the water – WAIT FOR THE EMERGENCY SERVICES.

Did you know? Over 50% of ice related drownings involved an attempted rescue of another person or a dog.



If bad weather is predicted, travel only if it is absolutely necessary and follow our advice.

Be prepared

- Take an emergency bag in case you get stranded or your vehicle breaks down. Include items such as medication, a blanket, warm clothes, ice scraper, de-icer, water, food, jump leads and a shovel.
- Wear your seatbelt.
- Follow the speed limit.
- Keep a safe distance from the car in front in case they stop suddenly.
- Avoid distractions.
- Never drink and drive.
- Plan your route and leave extra time for your journey.
- Take note of the road conditions and drive accordingly.



Wind

- Watch out for flying debris, including tree branches.
- In high winds, be aware of crosswinds on open roads or bridges.
- Take care when passing high-sided vehicles as they are particularly vulnerable to wind.

Fog

- Use your lights, where required. Beware of other drivers who do not have theirs on.
- If a sign shows 'Fog' but the road is clear, be prepared; you may suddenly find yourself in thick fog.



Snow and ice

- Clear snow or ice from windows, lights and wing mirrors, and also from the roof of the car. This could dislodge when you are moving causing a hazard to you and other road users.
- Take extra care on untreated roads. Black ice is impossible to see and can cause serious injuries. It's always better to get there late than not arrive at all.

