



Fire safety advice for users of health care products and equipment

Use of health care products and mobility equipment can allow people to remain independent inside and outside their homes. Whilst these items can ease discomfort and improve quality of life, it is important to follow both the manufacturer's product safety guidelines and these simple fire safety tips.

DYNAMIC AIRFLOW PRESSURE-RELIEVING MATTRESSES/OVERLAYS



These are used to prevent and treat pressure sores and ulcers which are caused by prolonged periods of immobility. The mattress is filled with air by a pump, which adjusts to the patient's needs.

When punctured by any heat source the escaping air can cause a fire to spread rapidly. The back-up battery may also continue to pump air, causing the fire to burn for longer.

- Never smoke or allow anyone else to smoke on, or near an airflow mattress.

- Don't use an electric blanket.
- Keep portable fires and heaters away from airflow mattresses.
- Never charge electrical items or place anything hot such as hairdryers or straighteners on an airflow mattress. They can overheat and cause a fire.

Remember!

It's really important to keep ignition sources such as matches, cigarettes, e-cigarettes, candles, incense sticks or oil burners away from health care equipment or products.

INCONTINENCE PRODUCTS



These are often supplied in large amounts to people who have continence problems, creating a potential fuel load to a developing fire.

Always store incontinence products and emollient creams safely and keep away from ignition sources such as:

- portable heaters
- matches and lighters
- e-cigarettes and any charging devices
- candles, incense sticks or oil burners.

EMOLLIENT AND SKIN CREAMS



Emollient products may contain flammable ingredients. They can be creams, lotions, sprays, ointments, soap substitutes, or gels that cover the skin with a protective film to reduce water loss. They can be used to prevent, or treat, pressure sores or dry skin.

- A build-up of emollient cream residue on bedding, upholstered furniture, soft furnishings, clothing and dressings can make a fire burn more intensely.
- Washing fabrics at high temperatures can reduce residual build-up but does not remove it completely.

HOME OXYGEN THERAPY



People with severe respiratory conditions may need to use home oxygen therapy. This requires specialist equipment (which can include cylinders and portable units) to pipe oxygen enriched air through either a nasal cannula or facemask.

In the event of a fire increased levels of oxygen in the air will cause it to develop quickly and intensely. Always follow the safety instructions from your healthcare provider or medical supply company.

- Never smoke or let someone else smoke nearby whilst using oxygen equipment. This includes using e-cigarettes and their chargers.
- Gas and electric cookers, portable or open fires should not be used in the same room as oxygen equipment.
- Make sure oxygen is turned off when not in use.
- Protect the gas cylinders from direct sunlight or falling/tipping over.

Remember!

It's really important to keep ignition sources such as matches, cigarettes, e-cigarettes, candles, incense sticks or oil burners away from health care equipment or products.

LITHIUM BATTERIES – ELECTRIC WHEELCHAIRS AND MOBILITY SCOOTERS



Lithium batteries safely power everyday devices including electric wheelchairs and mobility scooters, but can present a fire risk when overcharged, tampered with, subjected to extremes of temperature (cold or heat), submerged in water or damaged in any way.

It's important to be aware of fire safety advice especially when it comes to charging your battery.

- Avoid storing or charging lithium batteries on hallways, landings, or balconies, in the event of a fire they can block or delay escape.
- Read all safety instructions carefully and only use the charger supplied with the product.
- Make sure the battery is fully cooled before re-charging.

- Never cover a charging battery – they can get hot.
- Unplug the battery when it is fully charged or before you sleep.
- Stop using or charging immediately if you notice any of these fire risks: overheating, bulging, smoking, a fizzing noise.
- Buy replacement parts or chargers direct from the manufacturer. Online marketplaces are not currently required by law to check the safety standards of products sold on their sites.
- Dispose of batteries responsibly – use an approved recycling centre.

Remember!

Fit and test smoke alarms in the area where you charge or store your batteries.

TELECARE SERVICES



Telecare services help people to continue to live independently in their homes. They provide 24-hour call centre support that links to detection systems fitted in your home.

There is a wide range of alarms and alerts available from emergency pendants to linked smoke, heat and carbon monoxide alarms. Some equipment can also detect falls and extreme temperature changes.

Call centre staff are trained to deal with situations as they arise and will call emergency services if needed. For peace of mind make sure that telecare monitoring systems are tested regularly to ensure they are working properly – just check with the provider for information on how and when this should be done.

For more information about services in your area contact your Borough Council or Adult Care team.

- Make sure you wear your pendant or bracelet and that your pull cord is within easy reach.
- If you don't have telecare services – keep a charged mobile or cordless phone nearby in case of an emergency.
- Telecare services should always be linked to the smoke detection system.

SMOKING AND VAPING



The safest option is not to smoke, but if you are not ready to quit:

- Never smoke in bed or anywhere you could fall asleep.
- Take extra care if you drink alcohol or take drugs (prescribed or recreational).
- Don't leave any type of lit cigarette or pipe unattended.
- Use a proper ashtray and never throw hot ash into the bin.
- If you smoke on a balcony put it right out – being careless could cause a fire elsewhere in the building.
- Never vape or smoke if you use medical oxygen, emollient creams, or an airflow mattress.

Remember!

Want to quit? There is lots of advice and support available. Contact an advisor at 'Stop Smoking London' on 0300 123 1044 or visit: www.nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking/find-your-local-stop-smoking-service/

COOKING



- Never leave cooking unattended
- Fit a heat alarm in the kitchen and test it monthly.
- If you have to leave the kitchen – it's safer turn off the hob or grill.
- Loose clothing can easily catch fire – take care not to lean over the cooker or hob.
- Keep tea towels and cloths in a safe place away from any cooking.
- Never put anything metal in the microwave.

Assistive technology for the kitchen

There's a wide range of tools available to make your kitchen safer, from timers that switch off a hob automatically, to cooker guards. These aids can be especially helpful for people who have difficulties with their memory, mobility, vision or hearing.

Take a look at the Living Made Easy website to see what's available.

HEATING AND ELECTRICS



- Sit at least one metre away from portable heaters.
- Never put a heater near curtains, furniture or clothes.
- Don't overload electrical sockets.

CANDLES (including incense, tea lights and oil burners)



- Using flameless LED lights is a safer option.
- Put out any candles or oil burners when you leave the room and before bed.
- Place them in sturdy heat resistant holders.
- Keep them away from anything that may catch fire such as curtains and out of reach of children or pets.

BEDTIME ROUTINE



Don't leave devices on charge such as phones, vapes, e-bikes and e-scooters.

- Avoid running washing machines and tumble dryers while you are asleep (or when you go out).
- Close internal doors and keep door keys where everyone can find them.

BE PREPARED BY MAKING AN ESCAPE PLAN



It's important to make sure everyone in your home knows and has practised the escape plan if there was a fire.

Remember these top safety tips:

- Keep all exit routes clear.
- Remove any trip hazards (rugs and mats).
- Keep mobility aids and door keys within reach.

If you are unable to escape:

- Close your windows and doors and find a safe room.
- Call 999. Tell us where you are and the best way to reach you.
- Our control officers will provide you with guidance until firefighters arrive at the scene.
- Once firefighters arrive be prepared to follow their instructions.

Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPS)

These are a bespoke plan for anyone who may need assistance to evacuate a building or reach a place of safety.

It can include a person with physical disabilities, hearing and sight loss or limited mobility and those with a temporary condition e.g. heavily pregnant or someone with an injury.

Talk to your landlord or housing officer who can help you with this.

ALARMS



Working heat, smoke and carbon monoxide alarms save lives! Fit smoke alarms in the rooms you use most, and on every level of your home, they will provide early warning in the event of a fire and allow vital extra time to escape.

- Wherever possible fit interlinked alarms that can activate together.
- Fit a heat alarm in the kitchen (these react to rapid heat increase (not smoke)).
- If it is difficult to test your alarms ask somebody to do it for you.

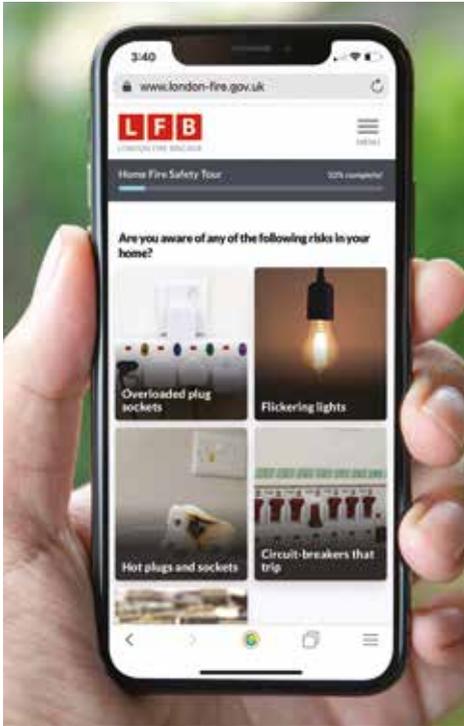
Specialist alarms, strobe light and vibrating pad alarms, are available for those who are blind/visually impaired, deaf or hard of hearing.

For more information visit:

[rnid.org.uk/information-and-support](https://www.rnid.org.uk/information-and-support)
or
[rnib.org.uk](https://www.rnib.org.uk)

In some circumstances sprinklers or water misting systems may be needed; seek specialist advice from LFB or BAFSA ([bafsa.org.uk](https://www.bafsa.org.uk)).

HELP US HELP YOU



Fire safety is important to keep you, your home and the people you love safe, but it can be hard to know what help you need.

That's where we can help – answer some questions using our online **Home Fire Safety Checker** we will suggest fire safety actions that are right for you.

This could be booking a home visit from 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:



Go to **[london-fire.gov.uk/protect](https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/protect)** or freephone **0800 028 4428**.

