



STAY SAFE THIS WINTER

South Wales
Fire and Rescue Service



Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
De Cymru

GWASANAETH TÂN AC ACHUB
Canolbarth a Gorllewin Cymru
Mid and West Wales
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE



Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
Fire and Rescue Service

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A SAFER WALES

Did you know?

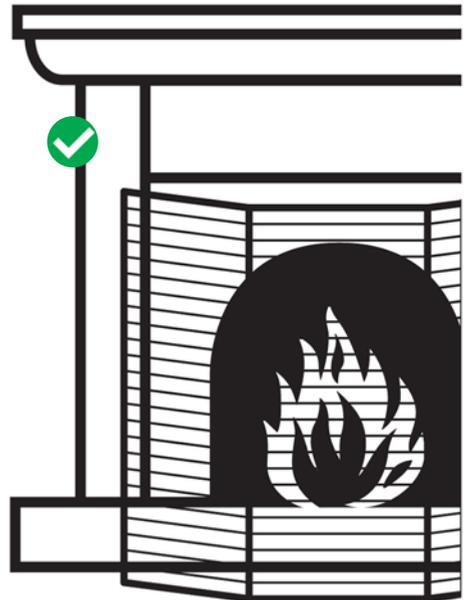
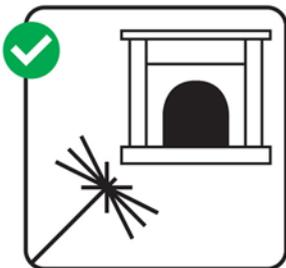
- 5,000 fires a year are caused by faulty electric blankets.
- In the UK on average, 12,000 chimney fires occur every year.

This leaflet provides you with key safety information to help you keep safe throughout the winter months.

Heating your home

Open fires

- Be careful when using open fires. Make sure you always use a fire guard to protect against flying sparks from hot embers.
- Make sure embers are under control and properly put out before you go to bed.
- Keep chimneys and flues clean and well maintained.

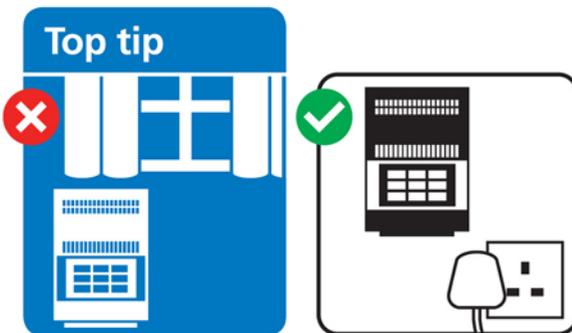


Heating your home

Using portable heaters

Keep heaters away from curtains and furniture and never use them for drying clothes.

- Only use gas or paraffin heaters in well ventilated areas. Heaters consume oxygen so you could suffocate if a room is not properly aired.
- Always unplug electric heaters when you go out or go to bed.
- Where possible secure heaters against a wall to stop them falling over.



Keep away from fabric

Keeping warm

Using electric blankets

Never use hot water bottles in the same bed as an electric blanket, even if the blanket is switched off.

- Unplug blankets before you get into bed, unless they have a thermostat control for safe all-night use.
- Don't leave electric blankets folded as this damages the internal wiring. Ensure they are stored flat or rolled up.
- Test electric blankets every 3 years. Age Concern or your local Fire and Rescue Service may be able to do this for you.

- Try not to buy second-hand blankets and check regularly for wear and tear. Replace your blanket when it is more than 10 years old.
- Look out for the following symbols which show a blanket is safe to use.



Store electric blankets flat or rolled up

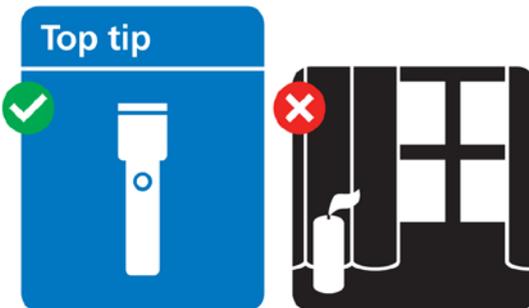


If the electricity fails

Alternative lighting

Keep a light or torch handy in the event of a powercut or failure.

- Take special care when using candles or matches. Put them out completely before leaving the room or going to bed.
- Use a snuffer or a spoon to put out candles. It's safer than blowing them out as sparks and hot wax can fly.
- Make sure candles are secured in a proper holder and away from materials that may catch fire – like curtains.
- Keep a mobile phone handy so you can still make an emergency call if there is a power cut.



Keep a torch and batteries handy

Chimney fires

The most common causes of chimney fires are:

- Fires or appliances which are too big for the chimney.
- Burning unseasoned wet wood.
- Infrequent sweeping and cleaning.
- Overnight burning or smouldering wood for long periods in wood stoves.

Simple tips to greatly reduce your chances of having a fire in your chimney:

- Sweep the chimney before use.
- Ensure a fireguard is in front of the fire at all times.
- Sparkguards can prevent a serious property fire.
- Extinguish the fire before going to bed or leaving the house.
- Never use petrol or paraffin to light your fire.
- Make sure you have a working smoke alarm and test it regularly!

How often should I clean my chimney?

We recommend the following simple maintenance routines:

- Solid Fuel Fires - Once a year for smokeless fuel; twice a year for coal.
- Wood Burning Fires - 4 times a year when in use.
- Gas Fires - Once a year if designed for sweeping.
- Oil Fires - Once a year.

In the event of a chimney fire

- Dial 999 and ask for the Fire and Rescue Service. It will help if someone can wait outside to meet them.
- If you have a conventional open fire, extinguish by gently splashing water onto the open fire.
- If you have a solid fuel appliance, close down the ventilation as much as possible.
- Move furniture and rugs away from the fireplace and remove any nearby ornaments.
- Place a sparkguard in front of the fire.
- Feel the chimney breast in other rooms for signs of heat.
- If a wall is becoming hot, move furniture away.

- Ensure that access to your attic or roof space is available for the Fire and Rescue Service as they will want to thoroughly check this area for signs of possible fire spread.

Always call the Fire and Rescue Service for a chimney fire - it has the ability to destroy your home.

Remember!

Without proper maintenance, any flue from a fire or stove can cause a dangerous build up of carbon monoxide gas. A carbon monoxide detector will help protect you from this risk.

CO Awareness

The silent killer

Carbon Monoxide (CO) is a colourless, odourless, highly, poisonous gas that is found in carbon based fuel appliances. If you use natural gas, LPG, heating oil, or solid fuel for heating or cooking, you should be aware of the dangers of carbon monoxide. If your equipment isn't properly installed and maintained you risk exposure to CO poisoning. Badly adjusted burners, blocked flues, dirty jets and poor ventilation can all be a cause of this illness which can kill in minutes.

Common symptoms of CO poisoning are often mistaken for flu and include:

- Mild headache
- Nausea
- Fatigue
- Dizziness
- Vomiting
- Drowsiness

It's easy to be safe

- Make sure your boiler and cooker are serviced once a year by a properly qualified engineer. If you live in rented accommodation, make sure your landlord abides by the law and gets the equipment checked every year.
- Buy a CO alarm for your family and protect them from the danger of poisoning. Older people, young mums and others who spend a lot of time in the home are especially vulnerable. Keep them safe!
- Everyone should have their chimney swept and checked regularly.

Fire safety for thatched buildings

Fit a smoke alarm in the loft and make sure it is connected with other alarms in the house.

- Use tested lightning conductors and check they carry one of these signs, which show they are approved and safe to use.



- Don't burn rubbish or garden waste near a thatched property.
- Use a bulkhead light fitting in your loft space. Avoid exposed light bulbs, which are more of a fire hazard.
- Never light fireworks near a thatched property.

Fit TV aerials to free-standing poles to avoid thatched roofs being struck by lightning.



Fit a smoke alarm in the loft



Winter Road Safety Advice

During extremely bad weather conditions:

- Check the local and national weather forecasts.
- Listen to local and national radio for travel information.
- Tell someone at your destination what time you expect to arrive.
- Make sure you are equipped with warm clothes, food, boots and a torch - in snowy conditions, take a spade.
- Clear your windows and mirrors before you set out and carry a screen scraper and de-icer.

Checks

Check the following yourself or take your car to your mechanic and ask them to check the following:

- Battery
- Wipers
- Engine antifreeze levels
- Windshield washer anti freeze fluid
- Heating system
- Brakes
- Tyres
- Windshield defroster

Safety

You can keep yourself and others safe, by:

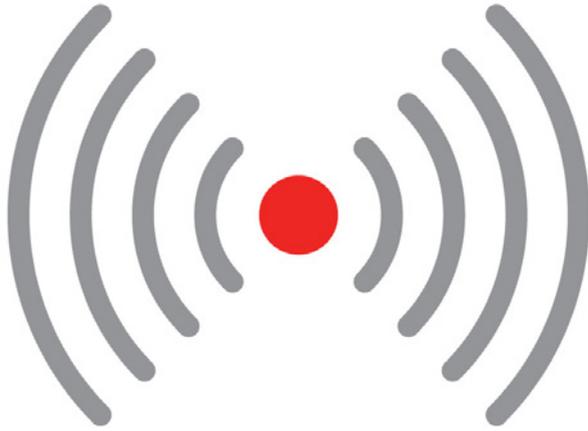
- Slowing down
- Keeping a greater distance between yourself and the vehicle in front, (increase the 2 second rule to 4 seconds or even more)
- Setting aside extra time to complete your journey

Winter driving conditions can be very difficult. Yet with a little care and prior planning, it is possible to minimise the risk and maximise safety for you, your passengers and other road users.

Driving tips

Follow these tips for safe winter driving:

- Keep your mobile fully charged.
- Pack a snow/ice scraper, de-icer, snow shovel, hat, gloves, boots, a torch, bottle of water and a first aid kit. For longer journeys, you should take blankets, a snack and a flask of warm drink.
- Wash the car frequently to get rid of the salt and dirt that builds up over the winter.
- Always keep a full tank of fuel - you never know when you might get delayed.
- Don't use water to defrost the windows.
- On colder days be particularly careful on tree lined roads - the trees prevent the sun's warmth from reaching the road, which may still be icy when all around has thawed.



SMOKE ALARMS

SAVE

LIVES

FIRE SAFETY CHECKLIST

Remember these top tips from our Stay Safe in the Home leaflet to stay safe from fire.



Don't forget

Keep this handy reminder of our top tips.

Fit smoke alarms on every level of your home.



Test your smoke alarm batteries every week. Change them every year. Never remove them.



Avoid leaving children in the kitchen alone when the cooker is on. Keep matches and sauce pan handles out of children's reach.



Take care when cooking with hot oil – it sets alight easily.



Extension leads and adaptors have a limit to how many amps they can take. Be careful not to overload them.



Dispose of cigarettes carefully. Put them out. Right out.



Make sure candles are secured in a proper holder and away from materials that may catch fire – like curtains.



Plan an escape route and make sure everyone knows it.



If there's a fire, get out, stay out and call 999.



Close internal doors at night to stop fire from spreading.

