

Fire Safety in Your Home

1. What to do in the event of a fire

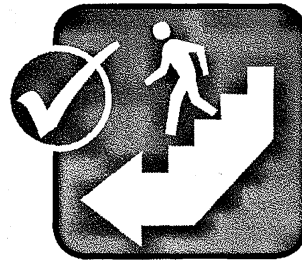
Flats and maisonettes are built to protect you from fire to some extent. Walls, floors and doors can hold back flames and smoke for a time.

If there is a fire somewhere in your block of flats, please follow this guidance:

- Call the fire brigade on 999 immediately. Unless the Fire Brigade tells you to evacuate, you will normally be safe if you stay in your flat unless heat or smoke is affecting you. Close all the doors and windows to keep out the smoke. If smoke gets in, leave immediately, closing the door behind you.
- Stay near a window and listen to instructions from the emergency services.

If there is a fire in your flat, please follow this guidance:

- Don't try to put it out, unless you can do so safely and quickly. Do not open windows, as this will help the fire to spread through your flat.
- Alert others to your flat to get out if possible.
- Get out of the building.
- Close doors behind you.
- Don't use the lift. Use the stairs to leave the building.



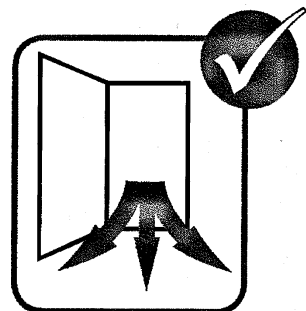
- If there's a lot of smoke, crawl along the floor where the air will be clearer.
- Alert other residents by banging on their doors on your way out.
- Call the Fire Brigade immediately. Dial 999, give the number of the phone you are calling from and ask for the fire brigade. They will ask for your name and address and where the fire is. Do not hang up until they repeat your address. Once you've left the flat, wait for the emergency services, who may want more information from you.

If you're trapped in your flat:

- If the fire prevents you from leaving your flat, go to one room near a window and with a phone.
- Call the Fire Brigade on 999 and give your address and flat number and follow instructions. Block gaps around doors with wet towels and stay low on the floor.

2. Important precautions

- Closing doors slows down the spread of the fire and reduces the main danger – smoke.
- Keep escape routes clear –don't keep large items such as buggies, bikes, furniture or anything that could catch fire on shared balconies, landings, corridors or stairways.



- Don't wedge self-closing doors open. These doors are normally fire-resistant. They help to stop fire and smoke spreading, but only when they are closed. If any of the self-closing doors are not working properly, please report it to us on **0800 783 7989** or via <http://www.originhousing.org.uk/myorigin/tenants/report-a-repair.aspx>
- Please also report any other fire safety concerns, especially any flammable materials left on stairs or landings.
- Security gates can seriously slow down your escape, which is why we will no longer be giving permission for anyone to fit one and why we will be asking that any existing ones be taken down.
- Make sure that doors to stairways and fire escapes aren't locked. Regularly check that you can open these doors from both sides.
- Before you go to bed or go out, close as many doors in your flat as you can. If a fire does start, this will help to stop it spreading.

3. Smoke alarms

You are more than twice as likely to die in a fire at home if you haven't got a working smoke alarm. A smoke alarm is the easiest way to alert you to the danger of fire, giving you and your family time to escape.

Origin is in the process of fitting smoke alarms to all its properties so your home may already be fitted with a smoke alarm.

If you have a smoke alarm you should test it each week to make sure it is working. There are three types of alarm;

- a) Alarms with replaceable batteries
- b) Sealed battery type
- c) Mains powered

If it is a type (a) battery alarm you should replace the battery once a year or earlier if it fails a test.

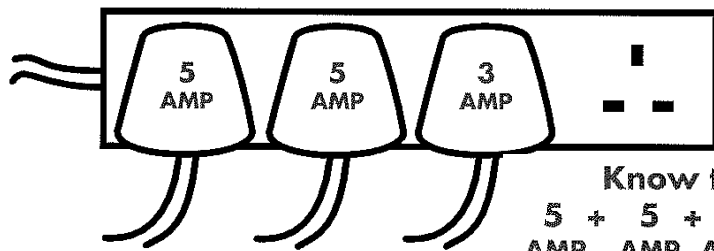
If it is a type (b) or (c) alarm you do not need to worry about replacing a battery but you should still test it regularly and if it is not working let Origin know immediately by phoning **0800 783 7989**.

If you do not have a smoke alarm in your property yet you can contact Origin to find out when one will be fitted.

Should you choose to fit one yourself, the simple battery type can be bought quite cheaply at most hardware shops and supermarkets but check that it complies with British Standard 5446. The best position to fit them is outside kitchens or bedrooms (or both) and over the stair landing in 2 and 3 storey homes.

4. Electrics

- Avoid overloading sockets. Keep to one plug per socket. Use a proper adaptor when using a non-UK electrical appliance. Never put two prong plugs into three prong sockets.
- Don't use heaters for drying clothes and keep them a safe distance away from furniture to avoid catching fire.
- If you are a tenant, call our Contact Centre on **0800 783 7989** if you are concerned about the electrics in your property, for example, if you notice burn marks around plugs or cables.
- Don't fix faulty electrics yourself.



An extension lead or adaptor will have a limit to how much electric power (measured in amps) it can take, so be careful not to overload them to reduce the risk of fire. Know the limit!

5. Candles and cigarettes

- Make sure cigarettes are put out properly after you have finished with them. Be extra careful if you have been drinking alcohol or taking medication which may make you drowsy. Don't smoke in bed.
- Be careful with candles and tea lights. Avoid placing them on or near materials that could burn or catch fire – like curtains.
- Keep matches and lights well out of reach for children.
- Make sure that cigarettes and candles are put out properly.

6. In the kitchen

- Take care when cooking with hot oil – it sets alight easily. An electric fryer is safer.
- If the pan catches fire, don't move it or throw water on it. Turn off the heat if you can. If in doubt, leave the room, close the door, warn others and call the Fire Brigade.
- Dry food before placing it in hot oil (wet food will cause the oil to bubble up and spill over the edge of the pan).
- Never fill a pan more than one third full of fat or oil and don't leave the pan unattended.
- Keep matches and saucepan handles out of children's reach and don't leave children in the kitchen when there is cooking on.

7. At night

Close all doors inside your home at night to stop any fire from spreading.

A lot of fires start at night time; do some checks before you go to bed:

- Check that the doors leading out of your home are clear.
- Put keys where everyone can find them.
- Empty ashtrays, making sure the contents are cold
- Un-plug appliances that use electricity, but not those that are meant to stay on like your fridge or video box.
- Turn off heaters.
- Check that the cooker is off.
- Don't leave your washer or dryer on at night.
- Always turn electric underblankets off when you get into bed and never use an electric blanket and a hot water bottle together [electric blankets should be checked at least every 3 years].

8. Plan your escape route

- Plan an escape route that everyone can use to get out of your home.
- Make sure that everyone knows how to escape and where to meet up if you have to leave the building in an emergency.
- Keep door and window keys where everyone can find them
- Keep all exits clear, including in communal areas.
- Close doors behind you when escaping from the building. Closed fire doors help to slow down the spread of fire and give more time for evacuation.

9. Getting fire safety advice

The London Fire Brigade gives fire safety advice and carries out free home fire checks. They can also fit smoke alarms for the deaf. You can contact them on **08000 28 44 28**