

# **FIRE SAFETY IN THE WINTER**



**FIRE  
KILLS**

**YOU CAN  
PREVENT IT**

## Did you know?

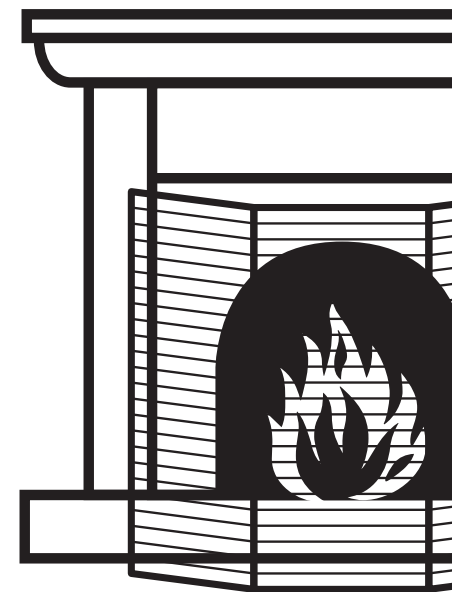
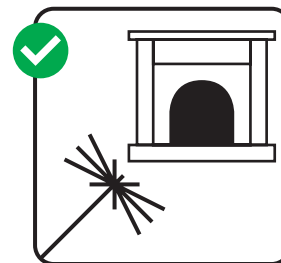
- 5,000 fires a year are caused by faulty electric blankets.
- In the UK on average, 12,000 chimney fires occur every year

This leaflet will help you keep safe throughout the winter period as this can be a particularly risky time for fires due to the need to keep warm.

## Heating your home

### Open fires

- Be careful when using open fires to keep warm. 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.

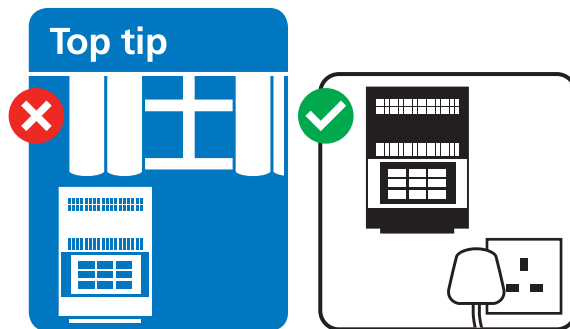


## Heating your home

### Using portable heaters

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

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



**Keep away from fabric**

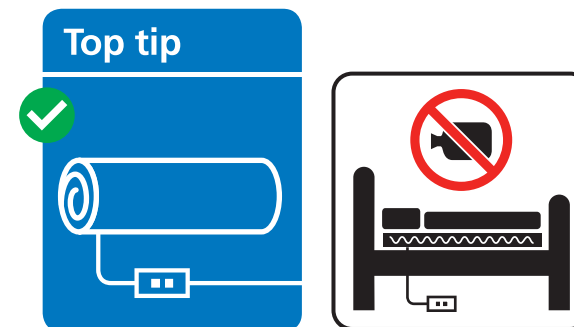
## Keeping warm

### 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. Store them flat or rolled up instead.
- Test electric blankets every 3 years. Age Concern or your local fire 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**

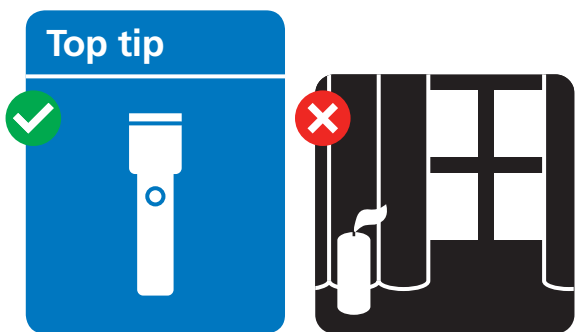
## If the electricity fails

### Alternative lighting

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

- If you have to use candles or matches always take special care. 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 when sparks 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**

## Fire safety for thatched buildings

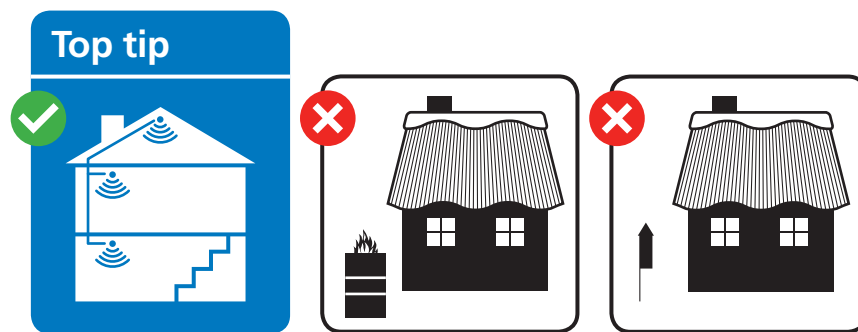
**Fit a smoke alarm in the loft and make sure it is connected with other alarms in the house.**

- Use lightning conductors that have been tested and check they carry one of these signs – they show they are approved and are safe.



- Don't burn rubbish or garden waste near a thatched property.
- Use a bulkhead light fitting in your loft space, instead of an exposed light bulb, as these are more of a fire hazard.
- Never light fireworks near the property.

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



**Fit a smoke alarm in the loft**

**Remember these general tips from our *Fire Safety in the Home* leaflet to stay safe from fire.**

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 cooking 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 always secure and away from materials that may catch fire – like curtains. ✓

Plan an escape route and make sure everyone knows it. ✓

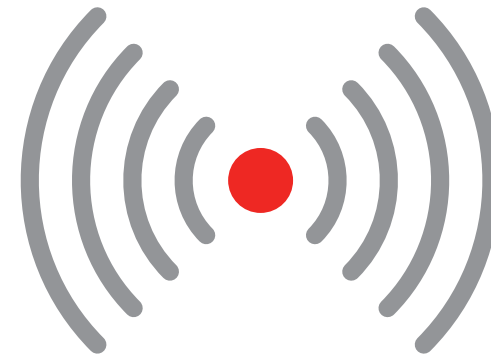
If there's a fire, get out, stay out and call 999. ✓

Close inside doors at night to stop fire from spreading. ✓

[www.direct.gov.uk/firekills](http://www.direct.gov.uk/firekills)

# FIRE SAFETY CHECKLIST

These general tips are taken from our *Fire Safety in the Home* leaflet. For a copy, visit [www.direct.gov.uk/firekills](http://www.direct.gov.uk/firekills) or contact your local fire and rescue service.



**SMOKE ALARMS  
SAVE  
LIVES**

For more information on general fire safety visit [www.direct.gov.uk/firekills](http://www.direct.gov.uk/firekills)

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