



DEVON &
SOMERSET
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

Fire safety for people with hearing, sight and mobility difficulties



We have developed this leaflet for people with sight, hearing and mobility difficulties and those who care for them. It provides practical advice and tips that will help protect you from the risk of fire.

If you know someone who you think may be at risk of fire, please contact us to discuss the possibility of a home safety visit.

Top tips

- Fit smoke alarms on each level of your home.
- Test the batteries every week; never take them out if the alarm goes off by mistake.
- Most house fires happen at night, so make sure your alarm is in a position that will wake you up, such as outside your bedroom.



Hearing difficulties

- If you have a hearing difficulty and live alone or with others who also suffer hearing loss, you can get a smoke alarm which uses a strobe light and vibrating pads that are placed under your pillow at night.
- For more information contact your local Sensory Loss Team, their details are at the back of this leaflet.
- In the event of a fire, if it is difficult for you to call 999 yourself, ask a neighbour or passer-by to do it for you.
- If you have specialist equipment, such as a text phone or minicom, you can contact the emergency services on 18000.
- If you are concerned that you will not hear your smoke alarm because you live in a large house, or one with more than one floor, you may want to consider asking a qualified electrician to install linked alarms. This means that when one detects a fire they will all sound.

- If you cannot make voice calls, you can now contact the 999 emergency services by SMS text from your mobile phone. Emergency SMS is part of the standard 999 service which has been designed specifically for people with hearing loss or difficulty with speech.

Register

You will only be able to use this service if you have registered with emergencySMS first.

To register, text 'register' to 999. You will get a reply – then follow the instructions you are sent.

For more information go to:

www.emergencysms.org.uk

www.rnid.org.uk/esms

Sight difficulties

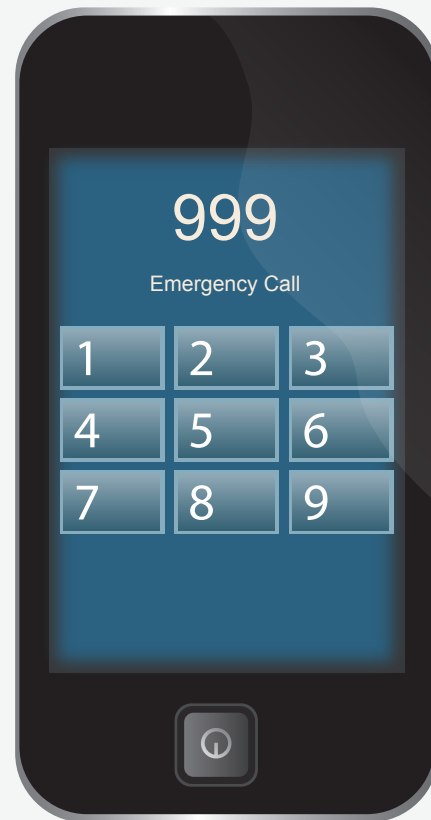
- Put a coloured sticker on your smoke alarm if you have trouble seeing it to test it.
- Consider fitting bump-ons (also known as plastic blisters) to appliances as a way of making sure they are switched off properly.
- Consider getting a qualified electrician to check your electrical appliances and leads for wear and tear once a year.
- If any electrical appliances are giving off a burning smell turn them off and unplug them immediately.

- You may also want to consider placing a tactile indicator along your escape route to make it easier to find the exit.



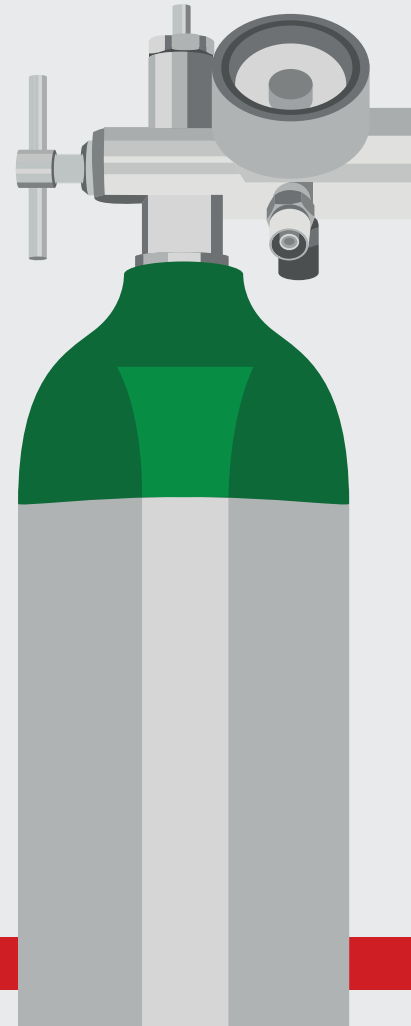
Mobility difficulties

- If it is difficult to test your smoke alarm ask somebody to do it for you. You can also get easy access alarms, which can be tested from the wall rather than the ceiling.
- If you have trouble moving around, consider fitting an intercom which will allow you to alert someone else in the house in the event of an emergency.
- Make sure you have easy access at all times to any mobility aids you may need, such as a walking stick.
- Make sure any stair lifts or wheel chairs are kept in good working order in case of any emergency.
- Always keep a telephone next to your bed in case you need to make an emergency call.



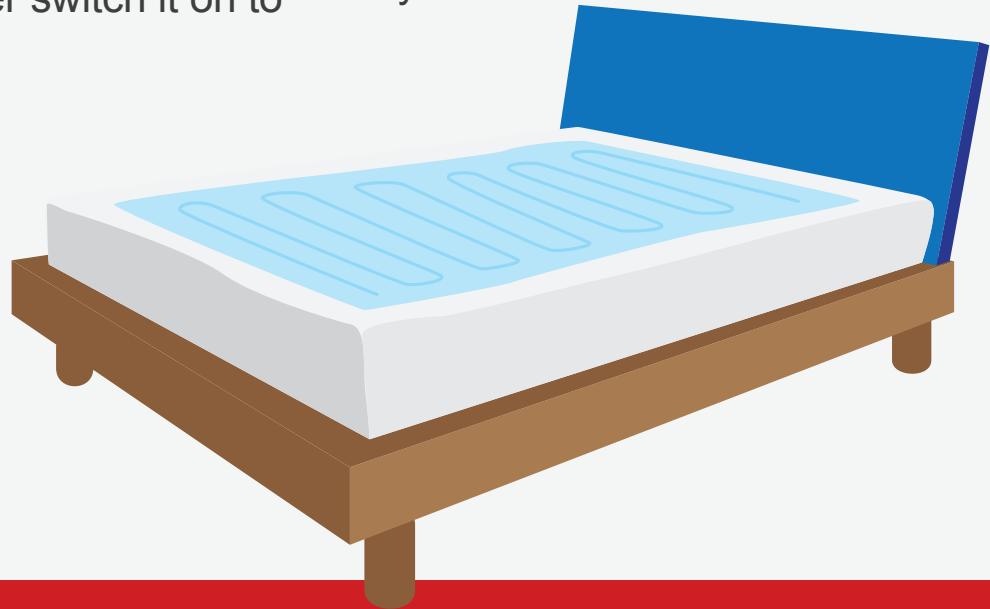
If you use oxygen

- Make sure your oxygen equipment is stored safely out of direct sunlight, in a well-ventilated area that is always dry and away from heat sources.
- Don't use oxygen near naked flames, including gas and electric cookers. Three metres is a safe distance.
- Never smoke or use electrical appliances, such as a hair dryer, whilst using oxygen.
- If you use oxygen at home and need to make an emergency call please inform the operator that you have oxygen on your premises.



If you use an electric blanket

- Don't leave electric blankets folded as this damages the internal wiring. Store them flat or rolled up instead.
- Never use an electric blanket if it is wet and never switch it on to dry it out.
- Never use a hot water bottle and an electric blanket together.
- Check your blanket regularly for wear and tear and have your blanket checked by a qualified electrician at least every three years.



Plan an escape route

- Think about all possible escape routes in case there is a fire.
- It is a good idea to practise an escape so that you feel confident you could do it day or night.
- Keep a phone in the bedroom in case you need to make an emergency call. If it's a mobile, keep it charged.
- Make sure all exits and escape routes are kept clear taking into consideration any mobility aids that you use.
- Keep keys where you can find them in case you need them in a hurry, preferably near to your door.
- The best route is the normal way in and out of your home.
- Make sure you know how your house or personal alarm works, including any passwords or codes.
- If you have a key safe outside your property it is a good idea to inform the emergency services of the code in case of an emergency.

What to do if there is a fire

- Don't tackle the fire yourself.
- If you can, get out, stay out and call **999**.
- If you can't dial **999** yourself get a neighbour to do it for you.
- If you can't get out go into a room that has a window and a phone and shut the door.
- Put blankets or towels around the bottom of the door to block out the smoke, then open the window and call '**Help Fire**'.
- Keep a whistle handy if it's hard to shout.



Further information

Disabled Living Foundation

0300 999 0004 www.dlf.org.uk

Royal National Institute of Blind People

0303 123 9999 www.rnib.org.uk

Action on Hearing Loss

0808 808 0123

Text phone: 0808 808 9000

www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk

Sense

0300 330 9250

www.sense.org.uk

Scope

0808 800 3333

www.scope.org.uk

Devon in Sight

01392 876 666

www.devoninsight.org.uk

Somerset Sight

01823 333 818

www.somersetsight.org.uk



For a **free Home Safety Check**

Contact us

 0800 05 02 999

 firekills@dsfire.gov.uk

 www.dsfire.gov.uk

Text info line: 078 00 00 2476

To request any information in this document in an alternative format or language please call 0800 05 02 999 or email [**firekills@dsfire.gov.uk**](mailto:firekills@dsfire.gov.uk)