

"A fire won't happen to me."

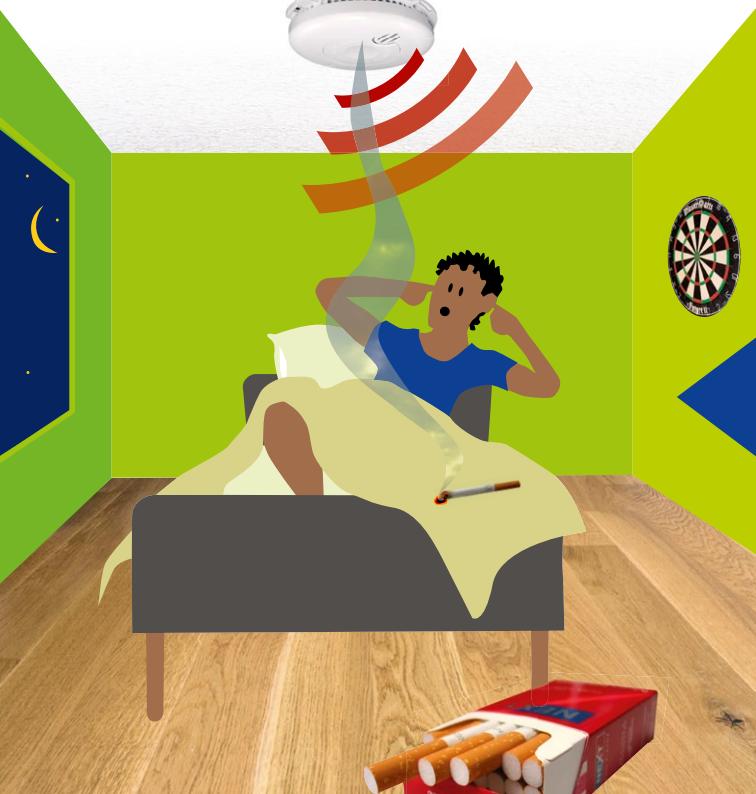
► Well, that's what you might think... But studies have shown that student housing is often not fire-proof. However, there are some simple tips and measures you can take to improve the fire safety of your room. And if fire does occur, make sure you know what to do to contain the effects. So read these hints and tips.

► Good to know

- Smoke is the main cause of death in a fire. When you're asleep, you smell nothing, but you will still hear the smoke alarm.
- Realise that nobody acts rationally in a fire. People may panic. Smoke will cause you to lose your bearings in no time, in even the smallest room.
- The use of plastics and electrical equipment enables a fire in a house to spread very quickly. You only have three minutes to leave your house safely. It is in these important first few minutes that you and anyone you share the building with must act decisively.

► What you can do

- Place smoke detectors in the corridors on all floors and preferably also in your own room.
- Find out what the fastest and safest escape route is and discuss this with the other people in the building.
- Identify a second escape route as a back-up in case the first escape route's exit is blocked.
- Agree on a place to meet outside. This will help you discover quickly whether there is still someone in the building.
- Agree which room to flee to if you can't get out of the house because all the escape routes are blocked. Choose a room with a window or balcony you can use to get to safety. The room must be clearly visible from the outside and it must be possible to reach it on a ladder.
- Assign tasks. For example: who is responsible for pets? Draw a map showing where the fire extinguishers are and where the main shut-off valves and circuit breakers for gas and electricity are.



- Agree on a fixed spot where the keys to the house will be left.
- Agree to always close the doors behind you in case of a fire. A door may prevent or at least delay smoke and fire spreading.
- Never use water to douse the flames when a pan catches fire. Put a lid on the pan and shut off the gas or electricity supply.

► Keep the escape routes clear

An escape plan is no use if the escape routes are barricaded by bikes, rubbish bags or empty bottles. Check the escape routes on a regular basis and talk to the people you share the house with if you ever find that a passage has been blocked.

► Tips to prevent fire

- Never smoke in bed (this is a major cause of fire).
- Do not empty ashtrays into waste bins.
- Be careful when cooking or deep-frying food, especially in the evening or at night. You may be overcome by sleep, even if you're hungry.
- Hang laundry out to dry at a safe distance from a heater.
- Switch off tube TV sets (the ones that stick out at the back) when you go to sleep or when you leave your room. Such TVs attract dust and can heat up so much on the inside that any dust in the TV may start to burn. Flatscreen TVs, such as LCD and LED TVs, produce a lot less heat and attract a lot less dust. Even if you can only switch your flatscreen TV to standby, there is very little risk that this will cause a fire.



Fire safety when living in digs

In this leaflet...

Studies have shown that student housing is often not fire-proof. However, there are some simple tips and measures you can take to improve the fire safety of your room. And if fire does occur, make sure you know what to do to contain the effects. So read these hints and tips.

► Tips to prevent fire

- Do not use three-way adapters as they may cause shorting.
- Do not connect any extension cords together as this might lead to overload.
- Check that the electric wiring in the building you live in or are going to live in has not been tampered with or installed unprofessionally.
- Be careful with halogen and spot lights. They are sources of heat that may suddenly cause a fire if they are placed too near flammable materials.



► But suddenly a fire breaks out anyway

Remember: you're on your own until the fire service has arrived. So make sure you know what to do in case of a fire.

► How to act?

- Stay calm.
- Alert any other people in your building.
- Keep doors and windows closed and close doors behind you.
- If there is smoke, stay close to the floor.
- Leave the building by the shortest route.
- Go to the agreed place to meet and check that everyone has left the building.
- Call 112 and give them your name and your full address.
- Wait for the fire service and report any special circumstances.

Fire safety when living in digs

Hints and tips for a fire-proof room

