

# Fire safety at home

Tips for fire safety at home



**“A  
house fire  
will never  
happen to  
me.”**

**► That’s what you think ...**

And yet the fire service receives thousands of reports of fires in homes every year. Sometimes there is only material damage. But every year hundreds of people are injured and there are dozens of fatalities.

Luckily there’s a lot you can do to improve fire safety in your home and, if there is a fire, to limit its effects. This check list can help you. It could save your life and the lives of other members of your household.



## ► Entrance

**1 Is your house number easily visible to the fire service?**

The fire service must be able to see whether they are at the right address from a moving vehicle.

yes  no

**2 Can you leave your house quickly if necessary?**

Decide on a fixed, safe place to store your keys that you can reach quickly.

yes  no

**3 Are the hallway and stairs free from obstacles?**

Objects located where you need to walk can hinder you if you need to flee in the event of fire. It also makes it more difficult for the fire service to move around your house.

yes  no

**4 Is the mains gas shut off valve easily accessible?**

In the event of fire or gas leak the mains shut off valve must be closed quickly. Gas is extremely dangerous during a fire.

yes  no

**5 Do all fuses in the meter cupboard function correctly?**

If you have regular short circuits at home it is important that the cause is discovered and rectified. Fuses are electricity safety measures.

yes  no

**6 Is the house protected by an earth leakage circuit breaker?**

An earth leakage circuit breaker can reduce fire hazard and protect you from shock hazard.

yes  no

**7 Is the meter cupboard free from flammable materials?**

If, for example, a short circuit causes a fire in the meter cupboard, flammable materials can also catch fire.

yes  no

## ► Storage area

**8 Do you have your central heating boiler checked regularly?**

It is wise to have your boiler checked annually. Incomplete combustion can create carbon monoxide. This is an extremely dangerous gas that you cannot smell, taste or see but you can become unconscious or even die from it.

yes  no

**9 Is the central heating boiler free from flammable materials?**

Flammable materials near your central heating boiler will accelerate a fire.

yes  no

**10 Do you ensure that your dryer's air outlet hose filter is dust-free after each use?**

Drying washing generates a lot of fluff. This can cause fires.

yes  no

**11. Are the taps and hoses to the washing machine fitted correctly?**

Incorrectly fitted taps and hoses can cause water damage, increasing the risk of short circuit.

yes  no



## ► Kitchen

- 12 Is the gas hose to the gas cooker in good condition?**  
Ensure that the hose to a freestanding gas cooker is kept away from the heat of the gas rings. Check the hose regularly for wear and tear and replace within fifteen years.
- yes  no
- 13 Is there sufficient distance between the cooking appliance and flammable items?**  
Keep flammable items, such as curtains, tea towels and towels away from the cooking appliance. These can catch fire easily.
- yes  no
- 14 Do you switch off the gas cooker or hob when you leave the room?**  
Do not leave pans on the heat or on the hotplate when you leave the room. A fire could start in a pan when you are not there.
- yes  no

**15 Do you know what you should do in the event of a pan fire?**

Don't leave the cooker/hob unattended when cooking. If there is a pan fire, place the lid on the pan. Never use water to extinguish the fire. Also switch off the cooker or hob, switch off the cooker hood and leave the pan to cool for at least half an hour. Check whether the fire is really out after half an hour.

yes  no

**16 Do you clean the cooker hood filter regularly?**

Grease can build up in the cooker hood and can catch fire. That's why you should clean or replace the cooker hood filter regularly.

yes  no

**17 Do you have your water heater checked and cleaned regularly?**

It is wise to have your water heater checked annually. A poorly functioning water heater can produce the extremely dangerous gas carbon monoxide. A correctly functioning water heater has a blue flame. Possible signs that something is wrong with an appliance include yellow/orange gas flames, increased condensation, a gas smell and physical symptoms including headache, nausea and tiredness.

yes  no

**18 Do you store highly flammable fluids, such as white spirits and methylated spirits in a well-ventilated area?**

Storing highly flammable substances in the home brings increased risks. That is why you should store these in a well-ventilated area, such as a shed, garage or storage area.

yes  no

**19 Do you store gas bottles outside the home?**

Gas bottles can be dangerous in the event of fire. Store these outside the home in a well-ventilated area. Do not store them in the cellar as gasses are heavier than air and can then be hazardous. Gas bottles must be stored upright.

yes  no



## ▶ Living room

### 20 Do you handle power strips safely?

Use approved, undamaged power strips and do not just interconnect these. Connecting too many power strips to one group can cause overload resulting in fire.

yes  no

### 21 Do you handle electric cables safely?

Check individual wires for damage regularly. Do not put them underneath a carpet or rug. Unroll cable reels completely before use. Rolled up cable reels can overheat and cause fires.

yes  no

### 22 Do you extinguish your cigarettes safely and throw them away safely?

Use ashtrays and do not empty these too soon: wait at least a quarter of an hour after extinguishing the last cigarette.

yes  no



## Living room continued

### 23 Do you switch off the television completely at night and when you are away?

Switch off a television with cathode ray tube (recognisable from the back, which juts out), when you go to sleep or when you leave the house. These televisions attract dust and become so hot inside that the dust in the television can catch fire. Flat screens, such as LCD and LED appliances produce much less heat and therefore attract much less dust.

If you can only put your flat screen television on standby, the risk that this will cause a fire is low.

yes  no

### 24 Do you unplug electrical appliances during thunderstorms and when you are absent for long periods?

A lightning strike can cause a short circuit and a fire. Prevent problems by unplugging appliances

or protect your equipment with special plugs.

yes  no

### 25 Do you have your chimney checked and swept regularly?

It is wise to have your chimney checked annually. Have the chimney swept by a chimney sweep to prevent fire. Addresses can be found on the

General Chimney Sweep Patrons

Bond website: [www.aspb.nl](http://www.aspb.nl).

yes  no

### 26 Do you make an open fire safely at home?

Never use methylated spirits or petrol to light an open fire; use kindling. If you have an open fire, use a fire guard to guard to protect against flying sparks from hot embers.

yes  no

### 27 Do you use non-flammable candle holders?

Make sure that your candle holders are non-flammable. Also keep flammable materials away from candles and tea lights.

Use sturdy holders for candles and a non-flammable surface for tea lights. Never place these too close together or on the edge of a table and extinguish them when you leave the room.

yes  no



## ► Bedroom

**28 Do you use the electric blanket according to the instructions?**

Electric blankets can cause fire through a short circuit or overheating. That is why you should use these correctly. If you're not using the blanket, store it rolled up. Caution: folding may damage the wiring.

yes  no

**29 Are there smoke detectors near the bedrooms and in the hall?**

Smoke detectors help you discover a fire in time and are a must in every home! When you are asleep, you don't smell anything but you will hear a smoke alarm.

yes  no

**30 Do you have a smoke-free bedroom?**

A burning cigarette can quickly cause a fire if you fall asleep while smoking. Fire resulting from smoking in bed is a common cause of fatal and non-fatal house fires.

yes  no

## ► General

### 31 Are the walls and ceilings in your home covered in non-flammable materials?

Synthetic materials produce toxic substances during a fire. Some materials including plastic panels and fibreboard ceilings can also accelerate a fire.  yes  no

### 32 Have you considered an escape route in the event of fire?

Work out an escape route in case you need to leave the house quickly, day or night. When smoke develops you quickly become disorientated, even in the smallest spaces that you know very well. Agree on an assembly point to which you will all go. It is important that you practise an escape plan together with other members of your household.  yes  no

### 33 Do you keep matches and lighters out of the reach of children?

Children playing with matches and lighters is a frequent cause of fire. Also make sure that you take care with matches and lighters. Alert children to the dangers.  yes  no

## ► Result

How many questions did you answer with 'yes'?

number  yes:.....

number  no:.....

- **All**  
Excellent! You have taken sufficient measures to prevent a fire and to limit the effects should one occur.
- **31 to 33**  
You are well aware of the potential dangers and act accordingly.
- **Fewer than 31**  
There is room for improvement as far as fire safety in your home is concerned!



## ► What if there is suddenly a fire?

Our increased use of synthetic materials and electrical appliances enables house fires to spread very quickly. You have just three minutes to leave your home safely. And remember: until the fire service arrives, you're on your own. That's why you should know what to do in the event of fire.

## ► What should you do?

- Stay calm
- Warn other members of your household
- Leave the house via the shortest route
- Go to the agreed assembly point and check whether everyone is outside
- Call 112 and give the fire service your name and complete address
- Wait until the fire service arrives and mention any peculiarities

## ► More tips

### Significant smoke formation:

Stay close to the ground; the air stays freshest and you'll breathe less smoke.

### Hot door handle:

First feel the door handle before opening a door. If it's hot be aware that a burst of flame may come out if you open the door.

### No escape route:

If you cannot get out of the house, go to a balcony or a room facing the street. Place a wet or dry sheet or cloth against the gap under the door to keep the smoke out. Only then should you open the balcony door or window to call for help.

### Clothing on fire:

Immediately remove the clothing and/or nappy. Do not use any ointments, but loosely cover the burn with transparent cling film and go to the hospital as quickly as possible.



## ► Smoke detectors save lives

You don't smell anything when you are asleep. Only your hearing continues to function. That is why a smoke detector, which makes a sound, is so important. It gives you time to escape. A smoke detector could save your life.

Approximately half of all house fires are not fires with huge flames, but smouldering fires. These smouldering fires produce toxic fumes, which claim the most victims. That is why you should install smoke detectors in your own home. Install a smoke detector on each floor. It is important that the smoke detector 'guards' the escape route from the bedroom to outside. When you use a baby monitor, you only hear sounds. A smoke detector in your child's room is essential!



## ► Instructions for use

To install, use and check smoke detectors and extinguishers the fire service strongly advises you to carefully read the instructions supplied with the product.

## ► Tackling a fire yourself

If the fire in your home is still small or has only just started you can extinguish this yourself in many cases, using a fire blanket or suitable extinguishing agent.

Don't forget: smoke contains toxic fumes and inhaling smoke is extremely dangerous. Make sure you don't stay where there is smoke. Only extinguish a fire as long as you know that you can leave the room easily.

And even with a small fire, ensure that other members of the household are in a place of safety and always alert the fire service (112). After all, you don't know whether the fire will stay small. You can read more information about extinguishing agents on [www.brandweer.nl](http://www.brandweer.nl).

# Fire safety at home

## In this leaflet ...

Fire safety starts with you. As fire service we would like to help you. That is why we have created a checklist so that you can check quickly whether you can improve fire safety in your home. There are also tips on what to do if there is a fire.