

Staying safe when you're staying at home: fire, burns and scalds

Fire, burns and scalds risk is heightened when we are staying at home...

Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service have reported almost a 50 percent increase in accidental fires within the home and a 48% increase in casualties of fire when comparing the period of 2 March to 8 April 2019 and the same period of time in 2020.

This is most likely due to the increased number of people staying at home due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Never has it been more important that we prevent accidents in the home.

There are many things we can all do when staying at home to STOP fire and to prevent the incidence of burns and scalds that will result in extra pressure being put on our emergency services.

The following are some risks that are easily rectified with simple preventative measures.

Creating a safe home working station

Many of us are now having to adapt to working from home during the covid-19 pandemic. Below are some things we need to be mindful of to ensure a home workstation is safe.

Check the current rating of the extension lead before plugging appliances into it. Most are rated at 13 A, but some are rated at only 10 A or less - the rating should be clearly marked on the back or underside of the extension lead. If not, refer to the manufacturer's instructions

Never overload an extension lead by plugging in appliances that together will exceed the maximum current rating stated for the extension lead. This could cause the plug in the wall socket to overheat and possibly cause a fire.

Check regularly for the following danger signs

- a smell of hot plastic or burning near an appliance or socket
- sparks or smoke coming from a plug or appliance
- blackness or scorch marks around a socket or plug, or on an appliance
- damaged or frayed leads
- coloured wire inside leads showing at the plug or anywhere else
- melted plastic on appliance casings or leads
- fuses that blow or circuit-breakers that operate for no obvious reason

Use the electrical safety councils overload calculator (link below) to check if you're exceeding the maximum load

<https://www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk/guidance/safety-around-the-home/overloading-sockets/>

Barbeque safety

Having a barbeque is a great way to spend time outdoors and to bring some much needed enjoyment into our daily routines.



However, barbeques are involved in hundreds of accidents that occur in our garden every year. To keep our barbeques a fun experience follow the following tips:

- Choose a strong, sturdy barbeque and only use a barbeque if it is in good repair
- Choose a level surface away from fences, trees, sheds and garden furniture – all of which have been known to catch fire
- Never light a barbeque in an enclosed space such as a garage due to the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning
- Make sure the barbeque is at the right temperature by the time you want to cook
- NEVER pour petrol, meths or accelerants onto a barbeque as they have been known to explode causing burns to the face
- Use long handled tools
- NEVER leave children unsupervised near a barbeque
- Make sure the barbeque is fully extinguished before you leave it
- Disposable barbeques need to have fully cooled before placing them in the bin

Staying Safe In the Kitchen

Currently we are staying home much more and as a result we are using our kitchens much more than usual.

Some simple precautions to prevent fire, burns and scalds in the kitchen are outlined below:

- Use the back rings when you're cooking and make sure pan handles don't stick out so that they cannot be knocked or pulled down when in use
- Try not to carry hot liquids too far and NEVER leave them at the grabbing level of little hands
- Never leave the kitchen unattended when cooking
- A build up of fat and grease on appliances will cause fires, so make sure they are kept as clean as possible
- Empty out crumbs from toasters often and keep the toaster pulled out from under overhanging cupboards, away from curtains or kitchen rolls
- Never leave a chip pan unattended

Follow the STOP fire campaign by being prepared:

- **S** - Have a working smoke alarm on every floor of your home
- **T** - Test your smoke alarm every week
- **O** - Be aware of obvious dangers in your home
- **P** - Plan your escape route should a fire occur

<https://www.facebook.com/NIFRSOFFICIAL/>

Follow the advice outlined in this document and other home safety websites such as those outlined below.. **#staysafe #stayhome**

<https://www.rosipa.com/Home-Safety/Advice/General/Preventing-Accidents-in-the-Home>

<https://www.capt.org.uk/>