

# FIRE SAFETY

Helping you to stay fire safe at home



# Dear customer,

This booklet shares some important advice on staying fire safe at home. Please read it carefully and bear the advice in mind – it could well protect you and your family in the event of an emergency.

If you have any concerns about fire safety, or want to ask us for more advice, you'll find our contact details on the back cover. Please don't hesitate to get in touch - fire safety is as much a priority for us as it is for you.

Yours faithfully,

**Paul Moat**

Chief Executive,  
Nottingham Community Housing Association



## Fire safety: our responsibilities

We all have a part to play when it comes to reducing the risk of fires. As a landlord, the law requires us to take fire safety very seriously.

We carry out regular fire risk assessments on our buildings which have communal areas, as required by law. These assessments take into account the height of the building and the people who live there. In some cases an annual fire risk assessment is not required by law, but be assured that we still carry out an annual review of those sites.

### Cladding

We regularly review fire risks at all of our buildings including four storeys and over. None of these buildings feature the Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) cladding that was thought to be a problem at Grenfell Tower.

### Gas safety

It's really important that you let our gas engineers into your home every year to test the safety of the appliances there. During our visit, we'll also test your smoke alarms.

### Fire Services

We are actively working with the Fire and Rescue Services where we have high rise properties to ensure we do all we can to keep our customers safe.

**You'll find the contact details for your local service on the back page of this booklet.**

# Smoke alarms



If you have battery powered smoke alarms, NCHA is responsible for ensuring they are in full working order, you are responsible for replacing the batteries and general upkeep.

## Testing your smoke alarm

Every year dozens of people are killed in fires at home because their smoke alarms failed to work as a result of flat or missing batteries.

Test your smoke alarm regularly:

### Once a week:

- Test the battery: press the test button until the alarm sounds.

### Once a year:

- Replace the battery.

### Twice a year:

- Open the case and gently vacuum the inside to remove dust from the sensors. If it doesn't open, vacuum through the holes.

We will test your smoke alarms as part of your annual gas safety service. If a new alarm is required we will aim to fit a new one during this visit. If this cannot be achieved the fault will be reported back to our Property Services team who will arrange any necessary repairs.

We will also replace any alarms that you report to us as faulty at any point during the year.

If you think your smoke alarm is faulty, please contact us – call 0800 013 8555.

# In the event of an emergency, how would you get out of your home?

It's a good idea to plan an escape route, and make sure everyone in your home knows how to escape – the best way will probably be the normal way in and out of your home, but you may have alternatives.

Keep exits clear, and make sure everyone who lives in your home knows where to find keys for doors and windows.

### PLEASE NOTE:

Some of our buildings operate a stay put strategy. Please make yourself aware of your building's specific plan.



# My escape plan

It is really important that you and your household have an escape plan in place.

Hopefully you will never need to use your plan, but if a fire does occur at your home, at least you'll be prepared.

Create your plan together. Make sure all members of your household know what the plan is, including the children. Remind your household regularly of the plan, and practise your escape route.

In the event of a fire in your home:

- 1) Wake up all members of your household**
- 2) Make your way out, via the nearest safe exit\***
- 3) Call 999**
- 4) Stay out**

\*PLEASE NOTE:  
Some of our buildings operate a stay put strategy. Please make yourself aware of your building's specific plan.



If you discover a fire or the smoke alarm sounds in your home, **GET OUT\***

**Main escape route** (usually the main route in and out of your home)

.....  
.....  
.....

**Alternative escape route** (if your main route is blocked)

.....  
.....  
.....

**Question:** Are the escape routes accessible to everyone? If there are people in your home who may need extra help (children / older people / those with mobility issues) assign them someone to assist.

**Agree a meeting point outside:** Once you have all exited the building, meet up to ensure everyone is safe

.....  
.....  
.....

**Location of telephone:** Call 999

.....  
.....  
.....

**Question:** Do all members of your household know how to dial 999?

**Location of keys:** Ensure everyone knows where the keys are to the doors and windows

.....  
.....  
.....

# Fire safety in communal areas

If you live in a flat with a communal hall, there are some additional things to be aware of:

- Check the notice board for a fire action plan.
- If there is a fire alarm system in the communal hallway, check the fire evacuation instructions and learn what to do in the event of it sounding.
- Do not leave any possessions in the communal hallway or landings. (These may cause an obstruction or provide fuel for a fire, as well as delaying your escape in the event of a fire.)
- Ensure that communal doors are secure and report faults with communal door entry systems (many fires are a result of arson caused by people who should not be in a communal area).
- Motorbikes and electric disability scooters should never be parked in communal areas.  
  
(Customers seeking to store electric scooters in their own flats should seek our permission before purchasing. Permission will only be given where parking a scooter will not cause an obstruction or a significant fire risk. Call us on 0800 013 8555 to speak to Your Community Co-ordinator or scheme manager.)



# Overnight safety

Have a check round your home at bedtime each night:

- Switch off appliances that don't need to be on – fridges and freezers are designed to be left on, but fire safety experts advise against leaving things like washing machines on overnight.
- Check that you have extinguished any candles and cigarettes.
- Close internal doors – this will help stop a fire from spreading.
- Make sure you've not left anything in front of doors – be aware that if a room has filled up with smoke, you may not be able to see obstacles blocking your path.
- Leave your keys in the same place each night, and make sure everyone in your home knows where to find them.



# Electrical safety

Make sure an electrical appliance has a British or European safety mark when you buy it.

Try and keep to one plug per socket. Certain appliances, such as washing machines, should have a single plug to themselves, as they are high powered.

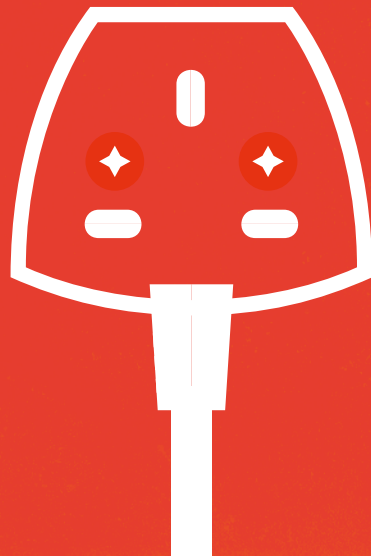
Make sure that any chargers you buy, for example for phones and tablets, have a CE mark on them – this indicates that they comply with safety standards.

Use a multi-way bar extension lead, rather than a block adaptor, as they're safer. An extension lead will have a limit to how many amps it can take, so be careful not to overload them to reduce the risk of a fire. Appliances use different amounts of power – a television may use a 3amp plug and a vacuum cleaner a 5amp plug, for example.

Keep your eyes peeled for signs of dangerous or loose wiring such as scorch marks, hot plugs and sockets, fuses that blow or circuit-breakers that trip for no obvious reasons, or flickering lights.

Check and replace any old cables and leads, especially if they are hidden from view – behind furniture or under carpets and mats. Unplugging appliances helps reduce the risk of fire.

Unplug appliances when you're not using them or when you go to bed.



# Cooking safely

When using a hob, make sure the handles of pans don't stick out over the front – they could easily get knocked over. If you need to leave the kitchen, take extra care: take pans off the heat, or turn down the hob.

If you have a gas hob, it's safer to use a spark device to light it – lighters and matches both have flames, which make them more risky.

Never leave children alone when there are pans on the stove, and store matches out of their reach.

Once you've finished, double-check that the cooker and stove have been turned off.

## Barbecues

When using a barbecue, don't get distracted. Make sure you set the barbecue up in a safe, open and flat location – away from overhanging trees and other hazards. Keep pets and children at a safe distance. Keep a bucket of water nearby in case you need to extinguish the barbecue quickly. If it's a gas barbecue, turn the gas off when cooking has finished, and store gas cylinders away from buildings.

Make sure the barbecue has cooled completely before disposing of ashes or moving it.

A balcony is not a suitable place to use a barbecue – you could be putting yourself and your neighbours at risk. If you're concerned about safety from your neighbours' barbecue, please contact us using the details on the back cover.



# Useful contacts

If you've got any fire safety concerns or questions please contact us on 0800 013 8555.

Or speak to your support worker if you live in a NCHA Care and Support property.

 [www.ncha.org.uk](http://www.ncha.org.uk)

 [info@ncha.org.uk](mailto:info@ncha.org.uk)

 [@NottsCommHA](https://twitter.com/NottsCommHA)

 [/NottinghamCommunityHousingAssociation](https://www.facebook.com/NottinghamCommunityHousingAssociation)

You can also contact regional fire and rescue services for free home safety checks. Please do not ring 999 as this is for emergencies only.

- **Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service**  
0115 967 0880
- **Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service**  
01773 305 305
- **Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service**  
0116 210 5555
- **Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Service**  
01522 582 222
- **Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service**  
01604 797 000