

Home Fire Safety

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Cooking

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Background

The kitchen is one of the most likely rooms in the house where a fire could start due to the increased number of risks, such as electrical items, gas and cooking on high heats with oil and other ignition sources.

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Practical steps for safer cooking

With bubbling pans, open flames and maybe a little one or a pet underfoot, kitchens are potentially dangerous places. Here are our top tips to reduce fire risks:

1. Try not to leave cooking unattended on the hob or grill – if you have to leave the kitchen, turn off the heat.
2. Not feeling 100%? Order a takeaway – if you're very tired, have been drinking alcohol or are taking medication that might make you drowsy, it's safer not to risk it.
3. Be fabric aware – loose clothing can easily catch fire, so take care not to lean over a hot hob, and always keep tea towels and cloths away from the cooker and hob.
4. Try to keep the oven, hob, cooker hood, extractor fan and grill clean – built up fat and grease can ignite and cause a fire.
5. Use spark devices to light gas cookers – they are much safer than matches or lighters, as they don't have a naked flame. They are safer around children, too.
6. Double check the cooker and hob are turned off when you've finished cooking – if you're forgetful (or someone you care for can be), why not take a photo if you have a smartphone? The action will remind you to double check every time.
7. Check toasters are clean and not placed under kitchen cabinets or close to anything that can catch fire.
8. Never put anything metal in the microwave.

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Always keep an eye on children and pets in the kitchen: don't leave them unsupervised; put matches away; and keep saucepan handles out of reach.

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What to do if clothes catch fire?

If clothes catch alight, don't run. Try and remember 'stop, drop, roll' – which means:

1. Stop – don't run, you'll make the flames worse.
2. Drop – lie down on the ground at once.
3. Roll – in heavy fabric or a fire blanket to smother the flames, though just on the ground will help.



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Kitchen Alarms

The most suitable alarm for a kitchen is a heat detector, which will sound an audible alarm when it detects a change in temperature. When gas is connected within a kitchen, which includes a boiler being located in the kitchen, further detection with a Carbon Monoxide alarm is advised. To gain specific advice for your home book a safe & well visit from your local fire service through this following link <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/Fire-and-rescue/Request-a-visit-from-the-fire-service/Request-a-visit-to-your-home-or-school.aspx>

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Local & National Statistics

- Around 60% of fires in the home begin in the kitchen. However, it's easy to enjoy cooking more safely with a little research, planning and awareness. *London.fire.gov.uk*
- 56% of all house fires are caused by cooking accidents. *Fire Kills*
- Around half of home fires are caused by cooking accidents. *Fire Kills*

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Extra Resources

- Fire Kills Leaflets: Fire Safety in the Home, Wishing you a safe and Happy Christmas, Fire Safety for Gypsies and Travellers, Fire Safety for Parents and Child Carers and Fire Safety on Boats
- <https://www.nfpa.org/Public-Education/Fire-causes-and-risks/Top-fire-causes/Cooking> leaflets and materials to provide to children to identify hazards in the kitchen

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