

7

Chimney Fires

6

Background

Chimney Fire Safety Week aims to raise awareness of safe chimney use, including the importance of ensuring that chimneys are swept regularly, are clean and appropriate quality fuel is used. Although chimney fires have steadily decreased in most regions over the years, the period from January to March represents its peak season.

5

Old properties with deep thatch, particularly those constructed pre-1960, are incompatible with the installation of modern wood burning stoves particularly in traditional chimney breasts. In some properties there is no safe way to use a wood burning stove, instead an alternative should be used such as, open fire, oil, gas or electric enclosed fire. Chimney fires are a high risk for properties with a thatched roof which once alight is almost impossible to control.

4

Chimney Fires are **avoidable**. Prevention is essential, detection is nearly always too late.

- Keep chimneys, flues and appliances clean and well maintained
- Be careful when using open fires to keep warm. Make sure you always use a fire guard to protect against flying sparks from hot embers
- Ensure the fire is extinguished before going to bed or leaving the house
- Never interrupt the air supply by blocking air vents or air bricks
- Avoid slumbering an appliance (unless it has been tested as safe to do so). Slumber mode is when an appliance is purposely set at a low or minimum output normally for overnight burning to be revived in the morning without the need for relighting.
- Chimneys that have been lined still require regular sweeping

3

Local & National Statistics

- 197 Chimney Fire Incidents were attended by Fire & Rescue services in England, between 2018/2019 – *Source Home Office, Fire statistics data tables*
- 120 Chimney Fires in Hertfordshire were attended between April 2017 to March 2020
- 63% of Chimney Fires occurred between January and March – *HFRS*
- Chimney Fires account for 4% of all primary fires that occur and often result in high financial loss – *HFRS*

2

Extra Resources

- Fire Kills Leaflets: Fire Safety in the Winter
- [National Association of Chimney Sweeps](#)
- [Heating and Equipment Testing Approval Scheme \(HEATS\)](#)
- [Thatched Roof Fire Safety Advice](#)

1

