

Home Safety Information

This leaflet provides you with some
general information about keeping
safe in your home, and reducing the
risk of accidents.



Fire

Smoke detectors should be fitted on every floor of your home. The detectors should carry the British Standards Institute Kite Mark and are available to buy in most DIY stores. They are easy to install and should be fitted on the ceiling as close to the centre of the room as possible. You should test your smoke alarms at least once a month and change the batteries annually. Dust should be removed from the inside of the alarms every 6 months by using a vacuum cleaner.

Scottish Fire & Rescue Service can provide a free Home Fire Safety Visit if you have concerns or would like more information and advice:

0800 0731 999 or
email hfsv@grampianfrs.org.uk or
call your local fire station.

The safety check will look at areas of fire risk within your home, fit smoke alarms where necessary and advise you on staying safe from fire.

There are some simple precautions you can take to reduce the risk of fire:

- Do not leave burning candles unattended or have them lit close to flammable items
- Tea lights or night lights should be placed on heat resistant surfaces
- Make sure cigarettes are properly extinguished and take care when emptying ashtrays
- Unplug appliances when not in use
- Do not overload electrical sockets
- Avoid cooking late at night if you have been drinking or are tired
- Have a fire blanket and dry powder fire extinguisher available
- Make a home fire escape plan and ensure everyone in the household is familiar with it
- Carry out a quick inspection of electrical appliances and sockets before going to bed.

Carbon Monoxide

Carbon monoxide is dangerous and can kill. As it is difficult to detect and has no odour, it is advisable to have a Carbon Monoxide Detector fitted.

The main symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning are similar to flu and can include:

- Drowsiness
- Weakness
- Headaches
- Feeling sick
- Pains in the chest

Visit your GP or local hospital immediately if you suspect your symptoms are a result of carbon monoxide poisoning.



Asbestos

Asbestos is a natural mineral composed of strong fibres that are fire resistant and a good insulator. It was widely used in the 1950's, 1960's and 1970's but can still be found in houses built up to 2000 before being banned. Breathing in asbestos can be fatal or lead to life threatening illnesses. It can also cause asbestosis, lung cancer and Mesothelioma.

Asbestos can still be found in domestic properties. Some typical uses are:

- Insulating boards on the back of doors to give fire protection
- Rope seals and collars round old boilers and pipes
- Asbestos cement drain pipes and flues
- Corrugated asbestos cement (shed and garden roofs and fascia boards)
- Thermoplastic tiles on top of old under-floor heating systems
- Artex ceilings (only some of the earliest applications)

Do not worry – these uses of asbestos are not a health hazard unless the material is broken or flaking.

If you think you have some asbestos in your home:

- If it is well sealed and not damaged it may be best to leave it alone – do not remove asbestos unnecessarily
- If it is broken or flaking, do not touch it. Contact a professional and licensed contractor. Details of local contractors can be obtained from the Asbestos Removal Contractors Association (ARCA): arca.org.uk **01283 566467** or email info@arca.org.uk

The Health and Safety Executive also provide further information on asbestos and its disposal:

www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/

Lead Pipes

Houses built before 1955 may have lead plumbing both internally and externally to the street main or private water supply. Lead in the water is toxic and the pipework is also likely to burst due to its age.

To have your water tested if you have a private water supply: Contact your local Environmental Health department on

01467 539539 or email
environmental@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

To have your water tested if you are on a mains supply Contact Scottish Water

0800 0778 778



Security

Taking a few simple precautions can help improve the security of your home.

- Make sure outer doors are fitted with security locks that conform to British standards
- Fit a door viewer or peephole and a security chain on external doors
- External security lights – ensure they shine on doors or driveways without causing shady patches
- Make sure all doors and windows are closed and locked
- Do not leave keys under doormats, plant pots etc
- Do not let anyone in your

home without checking their ID carefully

- If you are going on holiday or going away for an extended period, have lamps on timer switches (different times in different rooms). Cancel newspapers and have someone you trust collect mail and keep an eye on your home
- Check if there is a local Neighbourhood Watch scheme
- If you have one, set your burglar alarm every time you go out
- Keep outer doors locked at all times, even if you are at home – this should deter any opportunistic thieves.



Falls Prevention

Many trips and falls can be prevented by taking a few simple precautions:

- Use a non-slip mat in the bath or shower
- Make sure carpets are not loose or frayed
- Do not leave items lying about on the floor or stairs
- Switch on a light if getting up in the dark or leave low lighting on all night
- Make sure all rugs and mats are secured to the floor or remove them altogether
- Fit slip resistant flooring in the bathroom and kitchen
- Wear appropriate footwear
- Hold on to the banister when going up or down stairs
- If necessary, have grab rails and handrails fitted. This can be arranged through the Occupational Therapy Contact Centre on 0345 608 1206. If you are over 60 or have a disability you can also contact Aberdeenshire Council Care & Repair on 01467 534753 for advice and assistance with falls prevention.

For more information contact the Private Sector Housing Team at:
private.housing@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Tel: **01467 534753**



