

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE SERVICE

Making the West Midlands Safer, Stronger and Healthier

[wmfs.net](http://wmfs.net)

@WestMidsFire

# KEEPING YOU



# SAFE AND WELL

Safe and Well Number

Visit date

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**FireAngel®**

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#### DISCLAIMER

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# Do something great today

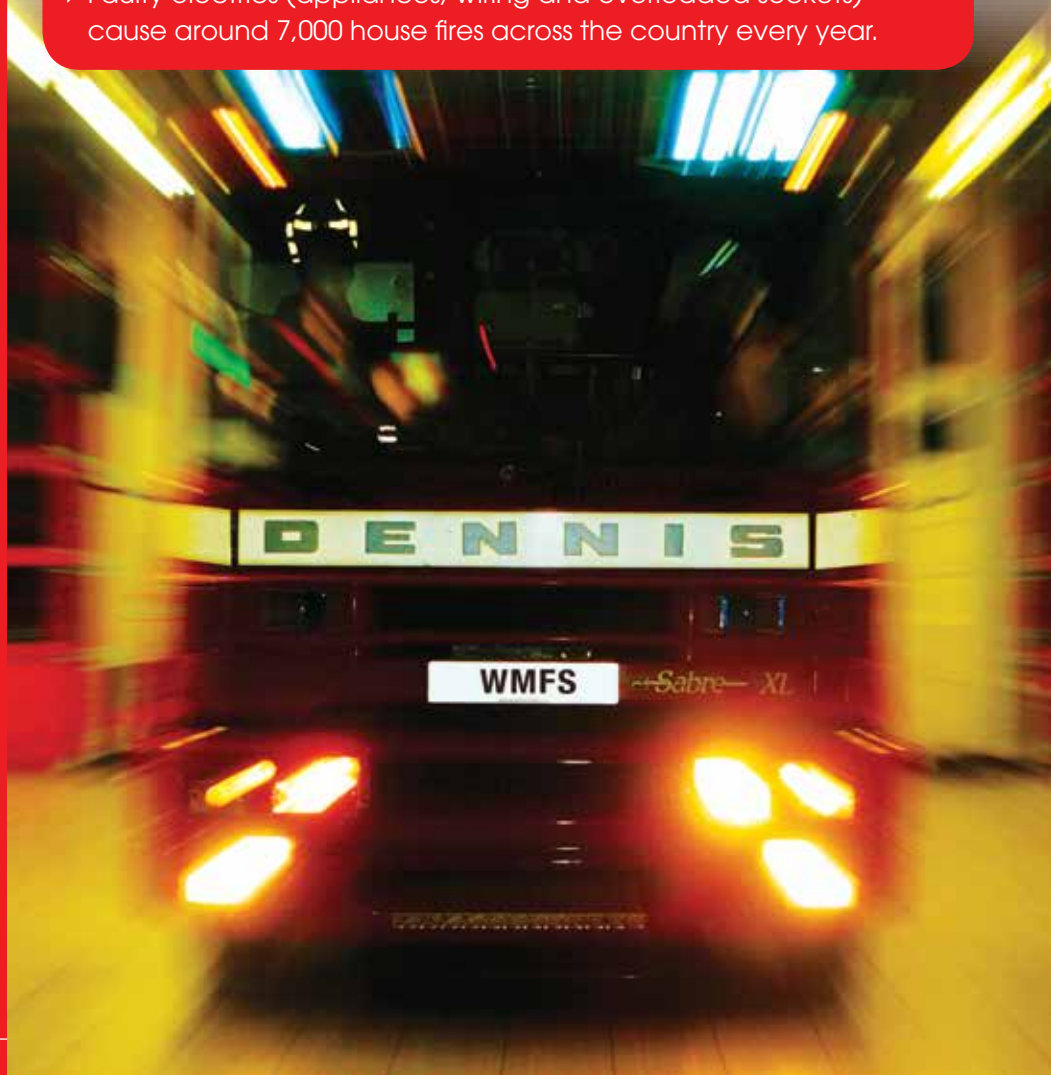
## Become a West Midlands Fire Service Community Member

[www.wmfs.net](http://www.wmfs.net) @WestMidsFire



## 4 Did you know?

- ▶ You're twice as likely to die in a fire if you don't have a smoke alarm that works.
- ▶ 90 people die each year because the battery in their smoke alarm was flat or missing.
- ▶ Over half of home fires are caused by cooking accidents.
- ▶ More than five fires a day are started by candles.
- ▶ Every three days someone dies from a fire caused by a cigarette.
- ▶ Faulty electrics (appliances, wiring and overloaded sockets) cause around 7,000 house fires across the country every year.



# Choosing your smoke alarm 5

## Top tip



Fit smoke alarms

- ▶ Fit smoke alarms on every level of your home.
- ▶ Smoke alarms are cheap and easy to install.
- ▶ They are available from DIY stores, electrical shops and most high street supermarkets.
- ▶ There are a variety of different models to choose from.
  - Hard wired
  - Battery
  - Sealed Long Life
  - Hearing impaired
  - Heat detectors
- ▶ Your local Fire and Rescue Service will be happy to give you advice on which one is best suited for you.

Look out for one of these symbols, which shows the alarm is approved and safe.



British Standard Kitemark



## 6 Fitting and maintaining smoke alarms



Test it



Replace it

- ▶ Don't put alarms in or near kitchens or bathrooms where smoke or steam can set them off by accident.
- ▶ The ideal position is on the ceiling, in the middle of a room, or in the hallway and landing, so you can hear the alarm throughout your home.
- ▶ Make testing your smoke alarm part of your regular household routine.
- ▶ Test it by pressing the button until the alarm sounds. If it doesn't sound, you need to replace the battery.
- ▶ If your smoke alarm starts to beep on a regular basis, you need to replace the battery immediately.
- ▶ If it is a ten year alarm, you will need to replace the whole alarm every ten years.

The Deaf Community Team West Midlands Fire Service Offers:

Fire safety education.

Safe and Well Checks.

Installation of deaf and hard of hearing smoke alarms, where appropriate.

Contact the Deaf Community Team  
Textphone/SMS text 07973 709560  
deafcommunityteam@wmfs.net  
Fax 0121 380 7201

Freephone 0800 389 5525

Webpage [www.wmfs.net/content/deaf-community](http://www.wmfs.net/content/deaf-community)



Action on Hearing Loss is the new name for the Royal National Institute for the Deaf. For Support, information, advice and products, including sample alarms/ carbon monoxide alarms for the hard of hearing or deaf

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

Free helpline 0808 808 0123

Textphone 0808 808 9000

SMS 0780 0000 360

[informationline@hearingloss.org.uk](mailto:informationline@hearingloss.org.uk)

# How to make sure your smoke alarm works

7

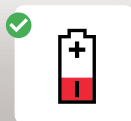
Test the batteries in your smoke alarm once a week.

Only remove the battery when replacing it for a new one.

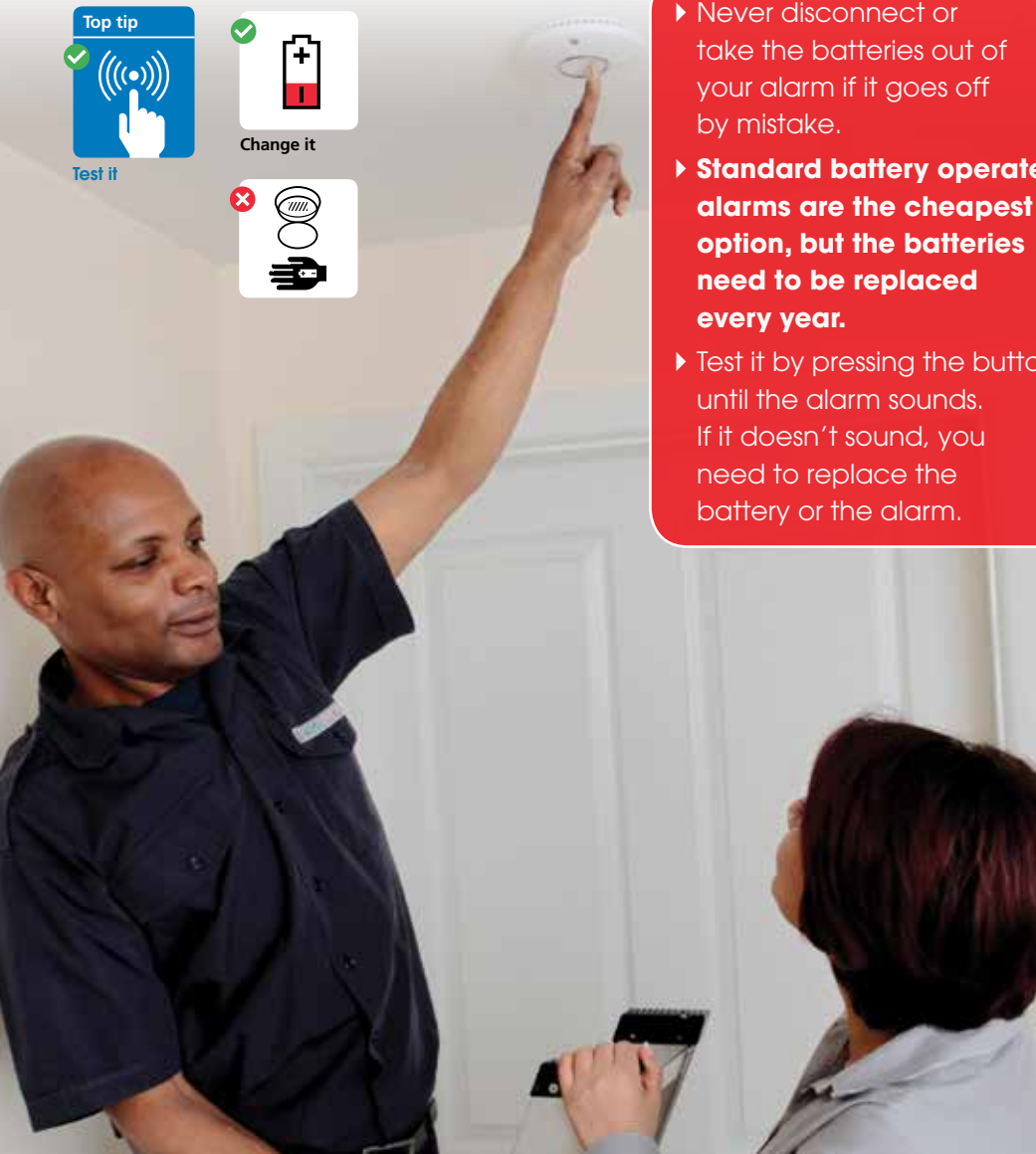
Standard battery alarms need to be replaced every 12 months.



Test it



Change it



▶ Never disconnect or take the batteries out of your alarm if it goes off by mistake.

▶ **Standard battery operated alarms are the cheapest option, but the batteries need to be replaced every year.**

▶ Test it by pressing the button until the alarm sounds. If it doesn't sound, you need to replace the battery or the alarm.

## 8 In the kitchen How to cook safely

Top tip



- ▶ Take extra care if you need to leave the kitchen whilst cooking, take pans off the heat or turn them down to avoid risk.

Top tip



- ▶ Make sure saucepan handles don't stick out – so they don't get knocked off the stove.

- ▶ Take care if you're wearing loose clothing – they can easily catch fire.

- ▶ Keep tea towels and cloths away from the cooker and hob.



- ▶ Spark devices are safer than matches or lighters to light gas cookers, because they don't have a naked flame.

- ▶ Double check the cooker is off when you've finished cooking



### Take care with electrics

- ▶ Keep electrics (leads and appliances) away from water.



- ▶ Check toasters are clean and placed away from curtains and kitchen rolls and from under kitchen units.

Do not use a toaster under a cupboard or close to a wall.



Don't put anything metal in the microwave

- ▶ Keep the oven, hob and grill clean and in good working order.

A build up of fat and grease can fuel a fire.

### Deep fat frying

- ▶ Take care when cooking with hot oil – it sets alight easily.
- ▶ Never fill a pan more than a third full of oil.
- ▶ Make sure food is dry before putting it in hot oil so it doesn't splash.
- ▶ If the oil starts to smoke – it's too hot. Turn off the heat and leave it to cool.
- ▶ Use a thermostat controlled electric deep fat fryer. They can't overheat.



# Watch what you heat

59% of all house fires start in the kitchen

**Do not cook if you are affected by alcohol/drugs, including prescription drugs.**

## **What to do if a pan catches fire**

- ▶ Don't take any risks. Turn off the heat if it's safe to do so. **Never throw water over it.**
- ▶ Don't tackle the fire yourself.

**GET OUT  
STAY OUT  
AND CALL  
999**



**CLOSE DOORS  
BEHIND YOU**

**IF SAFE TO DO SO**

**Never leave children in the kitchen alone when cooking on the hob.  
Keep matches and pan handles out of their reach to keep them safe.**

# 10 Cigarettes

Put cigarettes out properly and dispose of them carefully.  
Put them out.  
Right out!

## Top tip



Put them out.  
Right out!



- ▶ **Never** smoke in bed.
- ▶ **Never** smoke if using Medical Oxygen
- ▶ Use an **ashtray** – never a wastepaper basket.
- ▶ **Empty your ashtray safely** before going to bed.
- ▶ Make sure your ashtray can't tip over and is made of a material that won't burn.
- ▶ **Don't leave a lit cigarette, cigar or pipe lying around.** They can easily fall over and start a fire.
- ▶ **Take extra care** if you smoke **when you're tired**, taking **prescription drugs**, or **if you've been drinking**. You might fall asleep and set your bed or sofa on fire.
- ▶ **Keep matches and lighters out of children's reach.**
- ▶ Consider buying child resistant lighters and match boxes.

## Call to Quit

Your local stop smoking service can help you quit. Call **FREE** on:

**0800 052 5855**

or text **'QUIT'** to 80800

**NHS**

**SMOKEFREE**  
BRISTOL

**NHS Smoke Free National helpline**  
**0300 123 1044**

**GET OUT  
STAY OUT  
AND CALL  
'999**



**CLOSE DOORS  
BEHIND YOU**

## Call to Quit

Your local stop smoking service can help you quit. Call **FREE** on:

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**NHS Smoke Free National helpline**  
**0300 123 1044**

## e-Cigarettes - an electronic cigarette

It is recommended that only the battery and charger provided with the e-cigarette are used when charging.

Never leave an e-cigarette charging over-night. There have been a number of fires started by e-cigarettes left to charge over-night.

### Do



Only use the charger supplied with the E-cigarette or recommended by the manufacturer. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions for safe charging, use and disposal. Charging requirements vary from one device to another



Charge the device on a flat, solid and stable surface, such as a kitchen worktop

**Never mix 'n' match chargers/cables/devices.**  
**You may compromise safety devices if you do so.**

### Don't



Don't leave the device on flammable or combustible materials when charging



Never leave the device on a bed or close to soft furnishings, or in a cluttered space



Don't exceed the recommended charging time, or leave unattended for any significant length of time - eg overnight while you're asleep, or when you go out

## 12 Electrics

### How to avoid electrical fires



Top tip



Don't overload

Know the limit!

$$5 + 5 + 3 = 13$$

AMP AMP AMP AMP



Try to use extension leads that have built in **thermal cut-out**.

An extension lead or adaptor 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.

- ▶ Always check that you use the right fuse to prevent overheating.
- ▶ Make sure an electrical appliance has a British or European safety mark when you buy it.
- ▶ Certain appliances, such as washing machines, should have a single plug socket to themselves, as they are high powered.
- ▶ Try and keep to one plug per socket.
- ▶ Never plug one extension lead into another.



Electrical fires account for over half of accidental household fires within Great Britain.

For more advice on electrical product recalls and home safety appliances go to: [www.esc.org.uk/public](http://www.esc.org.uk/public)

Keep electrical appliances clean and in good working order to prevent them causing a fire.



- ▶ Empty fluff regularly from tumble dryers, in accordance with manufacturers' instructions.
- ▶ Check for signs of dangerous or loose wiring such as scorch marks, hot plugs and sockets, the smell of hot plastic or burning, (buzzing or crackling sound), fuses that blow or circuit-breakers that trip for no obvious reasons and flickering lights.
- ▶ Check and replace any old cables and leads, especially if they are hidden from view e.g. behind furniture.  
**Never run** cables under carpets or mats.
- ▶ Unplug appliances when you're not using them or when you go to bed. This can reduce the risk of fire and also help reduce your energy bills.

### Portable heaters

- ▶ Position heaters up against a wall/an even surface to stop them falling over.
- ▶ Keep them clear from curtains and furniture and never use them for drying clothes.

### Using an electric blanket

- ▶ Don't leave electric blankets folded as this damages the internal wiring. Store them flat or rolled up instead.
- ▶ Unplug blankets before you get into bed, unless it has a thermostat control for safe all-night use.
- ▶ Avoid second hand blankets
  - check regularly for wear and tear.





# 14 Candles

Make sure candles are secured in a proper holder and away from materials that may catch fire e.g. curtains.

Top tip



Be careful  
with candles

- ▶ If there is a candle burning, always keep it in sight.
- ▶ Extinguish all candles when leaving a room or before going to sleep.
- ▶ Use a snuffer or a spoon to put out candles. It's safer than blowing them out when sparks can fly.
- ▶ Children shouldn't be left alone with lit candles.



**Don't tackle fires yourself.  
Leave it to the professionals.**

- ▶ Keep calm and act quickly.
- ▶ Get everyone out as soon as possible.
- ▶ Before you open a door check if it's warm using the back of your hand.  
**If it is, don't open it** – fire is on the other side and follow your escape plan.
- ▶ Don't waste time investigating what's happened or rescuing valuables.
- ▶ If there's smoke, keep low where the air is clearer.
- ▶ Call 999 as soon as you're clear of the building.

**999 calls are free.**

- ▶ Do not re-enter the building for pets or valuables.

## **WHAT TO DO IF YOUR ESCAPE ROUTE IS BLOCKED OR YOU ARE UNABLE TO ESCAPE**

**If it is TOO DANGEROUS to follow your escape plan.**

- ▶ Move all occupants to the safest room in the property.
- ▶ Keep the door closed and place bedding or clothing at the bottom of the door to block smoke.
- ▶ Have a phone with you
- ▶ **DO NOT BREAK THE WINDOW.** Open the window if it is safe to do so.
- ▶ Close the window if smoke comes in. A broken window cannot be closed.
- ▶ Balconies – check your landlords escape plan for guidance. Check for fire and smoke from below and falling debris before using a balcony during a fire.
- ▶ Phone the Fire Service – **999** and you will be advised of what to do.
- ▶ Firefighters will get to you quickly and escort you to safety.

**GET OUT  
STAY OUT  
AND CALL  
(999**



**CLOSE DOORS  
BEHIND YOU**

## What to do if your clothes catch fire

- Don't run around, you'll make the flames worse.
- Lie down and roll around. It makes it harder for the fire to spread.
- Smother the flames with a heavy material, like a coat or blanket.
- Remember, Stop, Drop and Roll!



**STOP!**



**DROP!**



**ROLL!**



- ▶ Run lots of cool water over the burn for 10-15 minutes (no longer than 10 minutes for a baby).
- ▶ Once cooled, remove any outer clothing but don't remove clothing next to the skin as it may be sticking. It needs to be removed by a doctor or nurse.
- ▶ If the burn starts to hurt again, hold it under cool running water.
- ▶ Don't touch the burn or burst blisters.
- ▶ **Do not use butter, margarine, creams or ointments.**
- ▶ Loosely cover the burn with cling film or clean non-fluffy material to stop it getting infected, which could be a clean plastic bag, clean pillow case, etc. Keep it loose as burns swell. Don't put cling film on the face or head.
- ▶ Call an Ambulance 999, if necessary.
- ▶ Get advice from your doctor, A&E department at your local hospital, NHS Direct telephone 111.
- ▶ Seek medical advice from your doctor if the burn is on the face, hands, feet, joints or genitals, or is larger than a postage stamp.

## **If you do a first aid course, you could save someone's life in a crisis.**

Start by learning some basic first aid or revise what you already know. The British Red Cross, St John Ambulance and your local NHS Ambulance Service run first aid courses. The British Red Cross has interactive first aid (<http://www.redcross.org.uk/What-we-do/First-aid/Baby-and-Child-First-Aid/>) information online. Your health visitor or local children's centre may also run courses.

# 18 Emergency calls to the fire service

**If you require the Fire Service in an emergency, always dial 999**  
**Please do not try and contact your local Fire Station.**

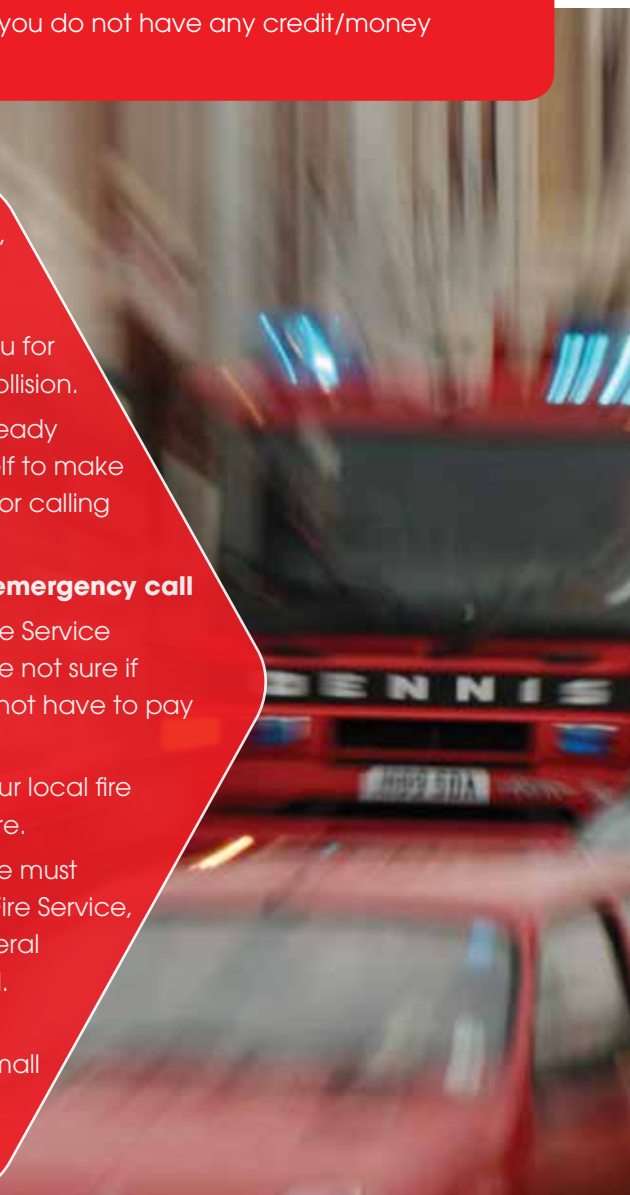
- Calls to 999 are Free from landline and mobile phones.
- You can call 999 when you do not have any credit/money on a mobile phone.

You can dial 999 from any private, public or mobile phone for free – even if you have no credit. The Fire Service will not charge you for attending a Fire or Road Traffic Collision.

Even if you think someone has already called the Fire Service, call yourself to make sure. You will not get into trouble for calling about a real emergency.

## **Do's and Don'ts for making an emergency call**

- ▶ Don't be afraid to dial the Fire Service if you need us, even if you are not sure if there is a fire or not - you do not have to pay for this service.
- ▶ Don't attempt to contact your local fire station. They may not be there.
- ▶ Don't think that someone else must have already called for the Fire Service, we would rather receive several calls to a fire than none at all.
- ▶ Do dial 999, and ask for the Fire Service no matter how small the fire is because small fires can soon turn into big fires.



When making a 999 call, keep calm. We will need to get some information from you so we can send a fire engine to the incident as quickly as possible.



**The Fire Service Control Operator will ask you a number of questions:**

1. What is the full address?
2. What is on fire?
3. Is there anybody trapped?
4. Are there any nearby landmarks?
5. What telephone number are you dialling from?
6. You may be asked for your name and address.

**Hoax calls puts lives at risk**

Occasionally, people ring the emergency services when they don't really need them. For example it could be someone calling for the Fire Service when there is no fire.

It costs time and money for the emergency services to respond to these calls, but ultimately it could put someone's life at risk.

If you are caught making malicious or hoax calls you could:

- ▶ Have your mobile phone disconnected, even if it is a contract phone.
- ▶ Receive a £5000 fine
- ▶ Receive a six month prison sentence.

# 20 **Contact 999 by SMS text**

## **What is emergency SMS?**

If you cannot make voice calls, you can now contact the 999 emergency services by **SMS text** from your mobile phone. **Emergency SMS** is part of the standard **999** service which has been designed specifically for people with hearing loss or difficulty with speech.



**To register visit [www.emergencysms.org.uk](http://www.emergencysms.org.uk)**

### **What is an emergency?**

Please do not send test or non-emergency texts – only use emergencySMS for real emergencies.

For example, if:

- ▶ someone's life is at risk.
- ▶ A crime is happening now.
- ▶ Someone is injured or threatened.
- ▶ There is a fire or people are trapped.
- ▶ You need an ambulance urgently.
- ▶ Someone is in trouble on the cliffs, on the shoreline or is missing at sea.

This service works throughout the UK on all mobile networks, it cannot be used from abroad.



**You must register your phone for this service by texting: register to 999**

## In an emergency

### ► Text 999

We need to know:

#### ► Who?

Police, Ambulance, Fire and Rescue or Coastguard.

#### ► What?

Briefly, what is the problem.

#### ► Where?

Exactly where the problem is happening – give the name of the road, house number, postcode or nearby landmark, if possible.

## What happens next?

The emergency service will either ask for more information or will tell you that help is on the way. Don't assume that your message has been received until the emergency service sends a message back.

## 22 Night time routine

**You are more at risk from a fire when asleep.**

**So it's a good idea to check your home before you go to bed.**

**You can carry out the same checks before leaving your house.**

### Top tip



- ▶ Close internal doors at night to stop a fire from spreading.
- ▶ Turn off and unplug electrical appliances unless they are designed to be left on – like your freezer.
- ▶ Check your cooker is turned off.
- ▶ Don't leave the washing machine, dishwasher or tumble dryer on.
- ▶ Turn heaters off and put up fireguards.
- ▶ Put candles and cigarettes out properly.
- ▶ Make sure exits are kept clear.
- ▶ Keep door and window keys where everyone can find them.
- ▶ Keep a phone close to your bed, making sure that there are no trailing wires.
- ▶ Don't leave mobile phones or electric cigarettes charging overnight.

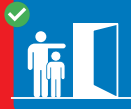






If you have a disability or would find it difficult responding to an emergency.

## Top tip



Plan an escape route



- ▶ Make sure your house number is clearly visible from the street so emergency services can easily find your home.
- ▶ Plan an escape route.
- ▶ Make sure everyone knows how to escape.
- ▶ Take a few minutes to practice your escape plan.
- ▶ Plan a second route in case the first one is blocked.
- ▶ Make sure exits are kept clear.
- ▶ The best route is the normal way in and out of your home.
- ▶ Close all doors.
- ▶ Have keys readily available for all exits.
- ▶ Review your plan if the layout of your home changes.

Keep door and window keys where everyone can find them



## 24 Fire safety in flats & high rise flats

### Introduction

Following a risk assessment the landlord should:

- ▶ Formulate an escape plan for all flats in the premises.
- ▶ Communicate the escape plan to all occupants (the plan may be a stay put policy).

It is the legal duty of your landlord to give you a copy of the escape plan for your building. Ask your landlord for a copy if you do not have a copy of the escape plan for your building.

### Interim Generic Guidance

This guidance is as an interim measure until the landlord/owner communicates the building escape plan to you.

### In the event of a fire in your flat

- ▶ Follow your escape plan: get everyone out, stay out, call the Fire Service out.
- ▶ Close all doors behind you on exit to contain the fire.
- ▶ If safe to do so activate the fire alarm if the building has one.
- ▶ If it is safe to do so alert all neighbours on your floor.
- ▶ Go down the nearest stairs, DO NOT use the lift.

### If there is a fire, but not in your flat

- ▶ If there is no smoke in the hallways or stairwells, and it is safe to do so, follow your escape plan.
- ▶ Call the Fire Service; NEVER assume that someone else has already done so – you could save someone's life.

### If trapped in your flat from a fire

If it is **TOO DANGEROUS** to follow your escape plan:

- ▶ Locate all occupants to the safest room within the flat;
- ▶ Furthest from the smoke/heat entry point; doors and walls will provide additional protection.





Older people and people with disability are at higher risk of being injured or not surviving a fire in a their home.

## Early Warning

Early warning is vital for everyone.

For people who live with disability it is crucial.

## Smoke alarms

More than one smoke alarm increases your early warning of a fire. Think about you and your home.

- ▶ **Can you hear your smoke alarm(s) if activated?**
- ▶ If you are a smoker, do you have a smoke alarm in every room in which you smoke?
- ▶ Are you sometimes affected by medication or alcohol?
- ▶ Will a smoke alarm at the other end of your home wake or alert you?

## Interconnected smoke alarms

Interconnected by either wireless or wiring if a smoke alarm operates, all connected smoke alarms in your home will be activated.

## Smoke alarms for deaf and hearing impaired

Smoke alarms for the deaf and hearing impaired work in conjunction with a strobe light and vibrating bed pad. **See page 6.**

## Smoke alarms linked to personal alarms

A smoke alarm linked to personal alarms means if the smoke alarm is activated an alert will register at the personal alarm monitoring agency. Contact your local council's occupational therapy team for information and local suppliers.

## Testing

It is vital that your smoke alarm is tested every month.

Ask a family member, friend, carer or neighbour to show you how to do this or seek their assistance to do this for you.

## 26 People with disabilities

### Responding to a fire

West Midlands Fire Service recommends that people get out rather than attempt to fight fire. A home escape plan will minimise the risk in any emergency at any time of the day or night.

Practise with a family carer, friend or neighbour so that they can assist you to identify any improvements. Make sure:

- ▶ You locate your bedroom as close to an exit as possible.
- ▶ You store mobility aids in easy reach in the bedroom at night.
- ▶ If you have a personal alarm wear this in bed or keep it next to your bed.
- ▶ If you have difficulty opening locked doors when you are at home put keys in deadlock doors or security screens and never deadlock doors when you are home.
- ▶ You get down as low as you can to stay out of the smoke when evacuating.

If you cannot evacuate from your home without assistance you should:

- ▶ Have a telephone by your bed pre-programmed with 999.
- ▶ Dial 999 and tell them you have a fire and need evacuation assistance.
- ▶ Stay on the phone so you can tell them where to find you.

◀ **See Fire Escape Plan on page 23**



### Other advice

- ▶ Make sure your house number is clearly visible from the street so emergency services can easily find your home.
- ▶ If you experience difficulty moving around your home (on a daily basis) this may affect how quickly you safely get out in an emergency. Consider an Occupational Therapy assessment for advice and information to maximise your independence and safety. Your local council will arrange for this.
- ▶ If you are experiencing difficulty managing tasks such as cooking safely, consider approaching your local council or a private provider for assistance or delivered meals.
- ▶ Compulsive hoarding significantly increases the risk of having a fire and being unable to escape, keep pathways and door ways clear of accumulated items. Contact West Midlands Fire Service for advice and information - **0800 389 5525**
- ▶ If you use medical oxygen always follow the safety advice provided by your supplier. Failure to do so will increase the likelihood of a fire and increase the intensity.



Are you gas safe at home?



## I SERVICE...

my gas appliance every 12 months and not just using anybody! I found them on the **GAS SAFE REGISTER** at [www.GasSafeRegister.co.uk](http://www.GasSafeRegister.co.uk) they checked that:

- ▶ My appliance is positioned in the right place.
- ▶ My appliance is burning correctly and not producing carbon monoxide.
- ▶ Harmful gases are safely removed from the appliance to the air outside.
- ▶ Ventilation routes are clear.
- ▶ Safety devices are working.

## I'VE CHECKED...

for signs that my gas is not working properly I know that I should **CALL FOR HELP** if:

- ▶ My appliance is burning with a lazy yellow flame (a healthy flame is crisp blue).
- ▶ I can see soot, black marks or staining on or around my gas appliances.
- ▶ The pilot light keeps going out.
- ▶ There is a lot of condensation on the windows.

## I'VE ENSURED...

my gas appliances are properly **VENTILATED** by:

- ▶ Keeping flues, chimneys and air vents clear to allow my appliances to work correctly.
- ▶ Having the chimney swept if I have a gas, coal, wood or peat burning fire, no matter how often or little I use it.
- ▶ Checking chimneys and flues for bird's nests, leaves and other natural debris to make sure nothing is blocking the exit.
- ▶ Agreeing a date with my neighbour to get shared flues or chimneys checked every year.



## I'M AWARE...

of the symptoms of  
**CARBON MONOXIDE  
POISONING:**



HEADACHES



NAUSEA



DIZZINESS



BREATHLESSNESS



COLLAPSE



LOSS OF CONSCIOUSNESS

## I'M AWARE...

of the health effects of  
**CARBON MONOXIDE  
POISONING:**

- ▶ Carbon monoxide poisoning occurs when you breathe in even small amounts of the gas.
- ▶ Carbon monoxide gets into your blood stream and prevents your red blood cells from carrying oxygen. Without oxygen, your body tissue and cells die.
- ▶ Levels of carbon monoxide that do not kill can cause serious harm to health when breathed in over a long period of time.
- ▶ Long term effects of carbon monoxide poisoning include paralysis and brain damage. Such long term effects occur because many people are unaware of unsafe gas appliances and subsequent carbon monoxide poisoning.







Do you understand the risk from dangerous gas?

## I'm Staying Gas Safe

because carbon monoxide has no taste, smell or colour.

### A CARBON MONOXIDE ALARM:

- ▶ Gives me an **audible warning** which will help to ensure I am alerted even when asleep.
- ▶ Looks similar to a smoke detector and is easy to fit.

Before purchasing a carbon monoxide detector, I made sure it was officially approved to **BSEN50291:2001 OR 2010** and had a **British or European approval mark on it, such as a Kitemark.**

### BUT

While an alarm will alert me to carbon monoxide in my home, **it is no substitute for using a Gas Safe registered engineer to ensure my appliances are serviced properly.**

If you smell gas, open doors/windows and get out into fresh air, the contact number to call:

Enquiries line for National Grid:  
**0845 835 1111**

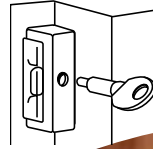
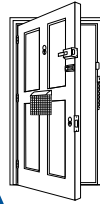


[www.carbonmonoxidesafety.org.uk](http://www.carbonmonoxidesafety.org.uk)

[www.GasSafeRegister.co.uk](http://www.GasSafeRegister.co.uk)

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

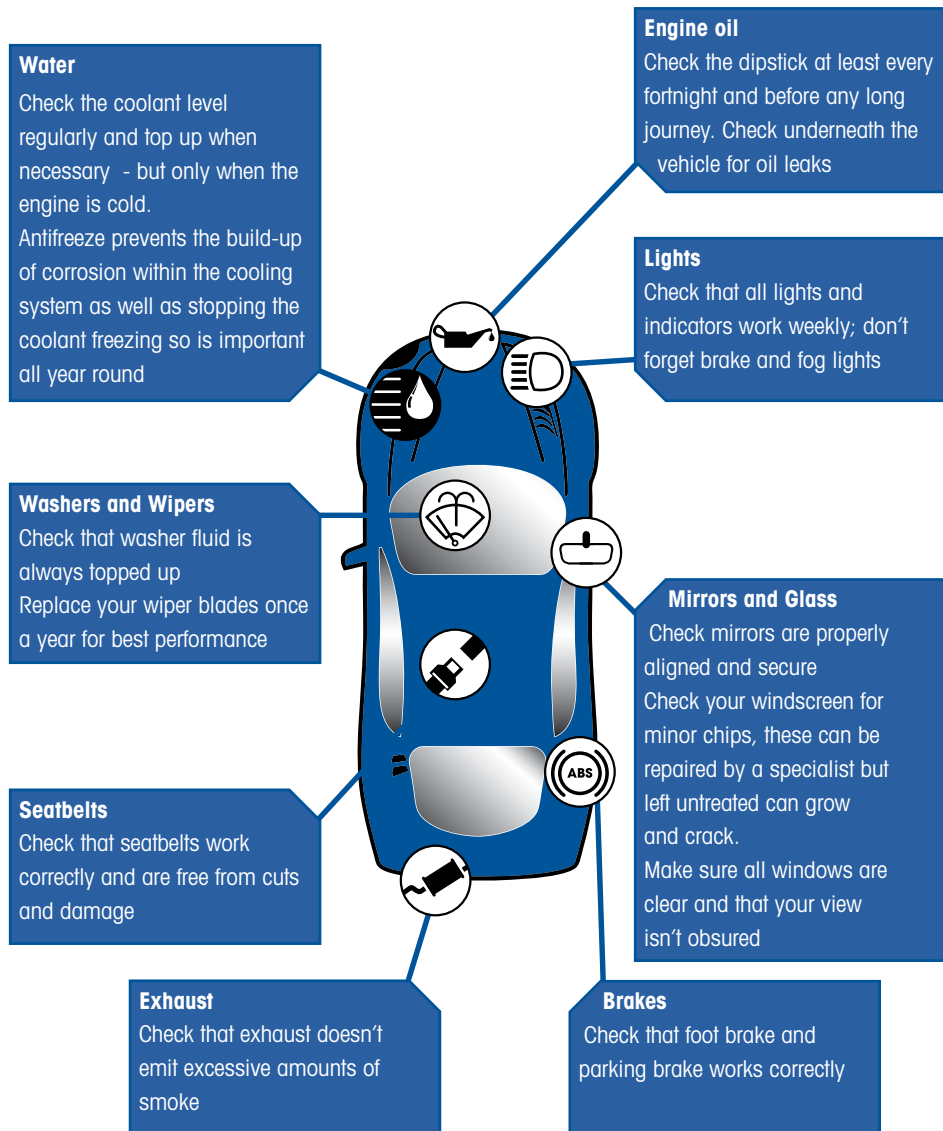
- ▶ Always lock doors and close the windows when you go out, even if you'll only be out for a short time.
- ▶ Window locks can help to stop people getting in, especially older windows and windows without double glazing.
- ▶ Use deadlocks if you have them - they make it harder for thieves to get out again.
- ▶ **Do not use deadlocks whilst you are in the property.**
- ▶ Don't leave spare keys outside or in a garage or shed. Keep garden sheds and garages locked and think about using a battery-operated alarm.
- ▶ Keep car and garage keys out of sight in the house.
- ▶ Don't leave window and door keys in their locks.
- ▶ Always draw your curtains at night and make sure valuable items cannot be easily seen from outside.
- ▶ Fit a 'spy hole'/door viewer so that you can see who is at the door. Also have a door chain so that you can open the door a little way to talk to visitors.
- ▶ Make sure that any security improvements you make to your house don't stop you getting out as quickly as possible if there is a fire.



## 32 Safe vehicle

As well as putting other road users at risk, if vehicles are poorly maintained it can cost drivers money, such as increased fuel use and overall cost of repairs.

There are simple regular checks that you can carry out to make your vehicle safer as well as saving you money in the long term.





# Practise Safe Checks

## BETTER SAFE THAN SORRY!

The condition of your tyres is crucial for acceleration, braking, steering and cornering. By law car tyres must have a minimum of 1.6mm tread depth across the central  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the tyre and around the entire circumference. **Check your tyres every month with this simple test:**



Simply place a 20p coin into the main tread grooves of your tyre. If the outer band of the 20p coin is obscured when it is inserted, then your tread depth is above the legal limit.



If the outer band of the coin is visible, then your tyres may be illegal and unsafe and should be checked immediately by a qualified tyre professional.

At the same time, check for and remove any stones or objects embedded in the tyre. Also look for cuts or bulges – if found, get your tyres examined by a tyre specialist. Check your tyre pressures monthly and before any long journey. **Don't forget the spare.**

# 34 Safe driver - Alcohol and drugs

There can be any number of reasons why people are involved in road traffic collisions but the four most common reasons can be attributed to what we call the **FATAL FOUR**

## Drink driving

Drink driving is still one of the biggest factors in people being killed or seriously injured on our roads.

There are strict alcohol limits for drivers, but it's impossible to say exactly how many drinks this equals - it's different for each person.

The way alcohol affects you depends on:

- your weight, age, sex and metabolism (the rate your body uses energy)
- the type and amount of alcohol you're drinking
- what you've eaten recently
- your stress levels at the time

Even a small amount of alcohol can affect your reaction times, judgement and coordination.

It can also make you drowsy, affect your vision and judgement of speed and distance.

**The only safe amount to drink if you're driving is nothing at all.**

## FATAL FOUR



**Speeding, driver distractions**

such as using a mobile phone,



**drink or drug** use whilst driving and



**not wearing a seatbelt.**

## Illegal and prescription drugs

Many medical and illegal drugs can have very serious negative effects on driving ability.

In the UK it is illegal to drive while impaired by drugs or when you have certain drugs in your body.

Illegal drugs can be highly unpredictable and can have serious and potentially lethal effects on your driving.

Many prescription and over the counter drugs can also impair your driving - If you're taking medicines, talk to your doctor, pharmacist or healthcare professional before driving.

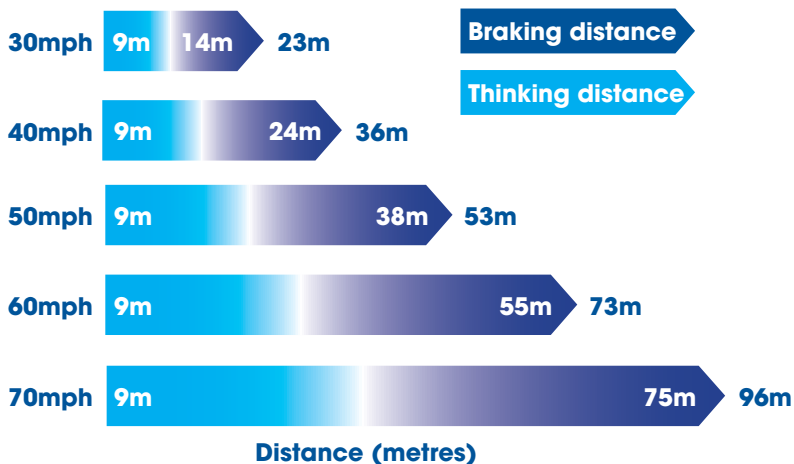


Speed is still one of the main factors in fatal road collisions.

The speed limit is a limit not a target; in some conditions even driving at the speed limit can be too fast.

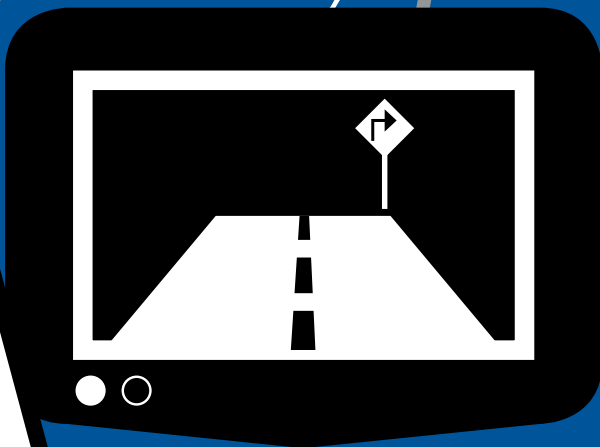


**Stopping distances can be twice as much in the wet and 10 times as much in ice/snow.**



## 36 Safe driver - Driver distractions

You are  
**FOUR TIMES**  
more likely to  
be killed or  
seriously  
injured in a  
Road Traffic  
Collision if you are  
driving using a  
mobile phone.



Using a mobile phone, sat nav or any similar device whilst driving means that the **DRIVER'S ATTENTION** is **DISTRACTED** from the road.

Even a split second glance at a text could cause an accident

Programme sat nav **BEFORE** setting off on your journey

**You are twice  
as likely to die  
in a crash**



**if you aren't  
wearing a  
seatbelt**

**Drivers and Passengers who fail  
to wear a seat belt are breaking  
the law.**

## **Important things to remember when choosing your child's car seat.**

- ▶ Ensure that you get the right seat for your child's weight and height
- ▶ Not all seats are compatible with all cars
- ▶ it is important to ensure that the seat is fitted correctly for every journey
- ▶ Seats are only designed for one impact – never reuse a seat involved in an accident and don't buy second hand seats even if they look ok

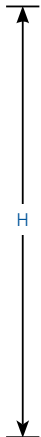
**Always get your child seat checked by a professional**



**Ensure  
that the seat  
has an official  
standard mark  
(ECE)**



**Children  
must use a  
booster seat  
until they are  
12 years old  
or 135 cm**



## 38 Safe journey

**We know that lots of accidents happen because drivers are unfamiliar with their journey or are rushing because they're late. Reduce your risk by planning your journey in advance and allowing extra time.**



Varying weather conditions can also affect your driving. Ensure your windows are clear from snow or ice before setting off and leave more of a gap between you and the vehicle in front in snow, ice or rain.

**Plan your journey to include a 15-minute break every two hours. If you start to feel sleepy, find a safe place to stop.**

### Safe Motorcyclists

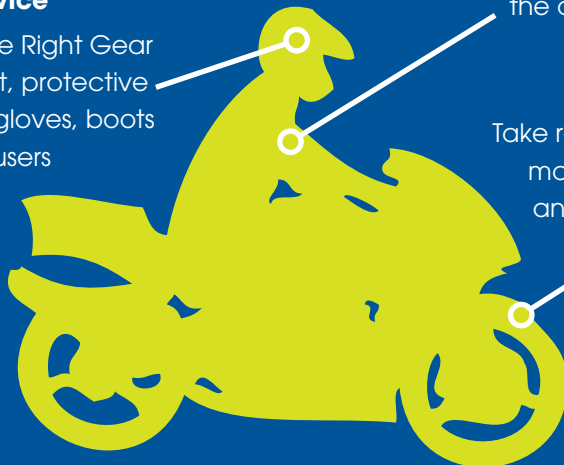
Motorcyclists are 38 times more likely to be killed in a road traffic collision than car occupants per mile ridden.

#### Key Advice

Wear the Right Gear – helmet, protective jacket, gloves, boots and trousers

Wear bright or florescent gear during the day and reflective gear at night

Take road positions that maximise your safety and visibility to other road users



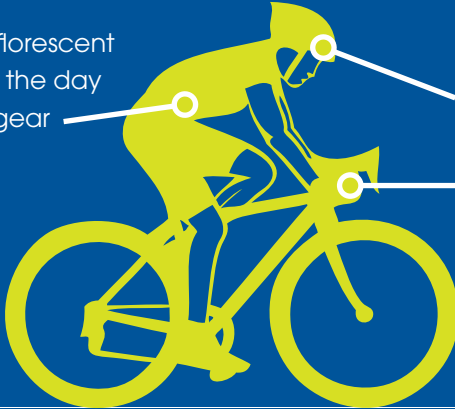
**Consider further training to improve your riding performance and safety**



## Safe Cyclists

The number of cyclists seriously injured has increased in recent years, faster than the increase in cyclists out on the roads.

Wear bright or florescent clothing during the day and reflective gear at night



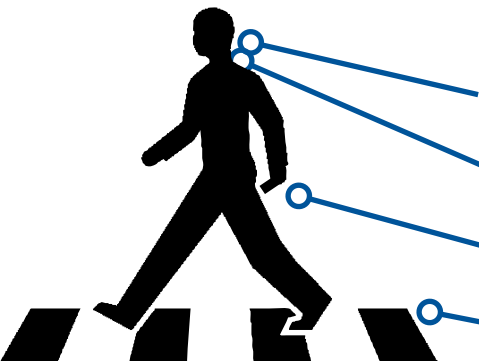
Key Advice **Always wear a helmet**

Always use lights after dark or when visibility is poor

**Look and signal to show drivers what you plan to do and make eye contact where possible so you know drivers have seen you**  
**Avoid riding up the inside of large vehicles, like lorries or buses, where you might not be seen**

## Safe Pedestrian - Be Bright, Be Seen

**Distractions attribute to a large number of road injuries for pedestrians**



**Stop, look and listen before you cross the road**

Take head phones out before crossing the road

Don't use your phone to make calls or read text messages whilst crossings the road

Cross the Road at designated crossings

**Don't cross between park cars or on bends**

**Always use footpaths, where there is no footpath walk on the right side to face traffic**

# 40 Personal safety

## Walking alone personal safety

The risk of being robbed or attacked in this country is small. However you should be aware of what to do in a threatening situation to protect yourselves.

- ▶ Make sure you stay on roads that are well lit and busy. You will be able to see anyone who approaches you and call for help if needed.
- ▶ Don't use shortcuts through parks or alleyways.
- ▶ If you think you are being followed cross the road or go into a shop. If the person is still following you phone someone to collect you or alternatively contact the Police non emergency number, 101 for advice.
- ▶ Do not listen to music from headphones. As well as being distracting it shows people you have something worth stealing.
- ▶ Carry a personal alarm. These can be purchased from high street shops and give off a high pitched sound.

## Travelling alone on public transport

- ▶ On buses sit downstairs close to the driver. Avoid sitting upstairs especially at night.
- ▶ Don't fall asleep as you're more likely to have your bag or coat stolen.
- ▶ **Do not** cover both ears when listening to music through **headphones**. As well as being distracting it shows people you have something worth stealing.
- ▶ Keep your valuables out of sight in your bag.
- ▶ If you're on a train and feel uncomfortable move carriages to where there are more people.
- ▶ If you can't move carriages stand by the train doors and change carriages at the next station.



**It doesn't matter what kind of vehicle you own**, thieves will take any car that is easy to steal, irrespective of the model.

## **Do's and Don'ts of Vehicle Security**

- ▶ **Do always check that you have locked the car, set the alarm and closed all windows and the sunroof.**  
This is exactly what the car thief is looking out for – that the car has not been locked.
- ▶ **Do try to park in well lit/used areas.**
- ▶ **Do wipe away the Sat Nav mark on your windscreen.**
- ▶ **Don't leave babies or young children alone in a vehicle unattended.** Cars have been stolen with babies inside them.
- ▶ **Don't leave car keys in the ignition.** At the petrol station or defrosting car windows in cold weather.
- ▶ **Don't leave car keys in view when at home at night.**  
Make sure car keys are not in view. However we do not advise keeping them in the bedroom. In order to get car keys, thieves may either go through the letterbox using an adapted device, which is called '**fishing**' or they will try the back door because so many people leave them unlocked or open.
- ▶ **Don't leave things on show.** It can take as little as 10 seconds for a thief to steal something from your car.
- ▶ **Don't leave anything with your name and address in the car.**  
If you do, you put yourself at risk of burglary, and possibly leaves you open to other types of fraud.

# 42 Vehicle crime – Protect yourself

Remember, most car crime can be prevented

## Other Tips

► **When you park, there are a few simple actions to reduce the risk of your car being taken.**

If you're parking on a road turn the wheels into the kerb, and when in a car park turn the wheels towards another car as thieves will avoid your vehicle if it takes a lot more effort and time to move it. When parking on a drive, always drive in rather than reverse in and again, turn the wheels, and if you have a driveway, use it, as the thief has to come closer to you to take the car and they don't like to do.

► **Any anti-theft device will deter thieves.**

Always have some kind of security measure because the thief doesn't want to spend time trying to remove it.

► **The best way to keep your vehicle safe is to put a tracker on it.**

Consider using wheel-locking nuts, and a sticker saying the vehicle is alarmed.

► **Secure number plates.**

Consider fitting anti-tamper screws to your number plates. Available from most vehicle supplies shops or a garage.

► **Mark Catalytic Converters**

– ask at your local garage or vehicle supplies shops.

For further information on vehicle safety contact your local police station or Crimestoppers, telephone: 0800 555 111.

# How to report a crime to the police 43

**In an emergency dial 999 – your call is free and the service is free**

- ▶ Serious injury has been caused or there is a threat of serious injury e.g. someone has been attacked or mugged.
- ▶ A crime is in progress and the suspects are at or near the scene.

## **Non emergency crimes dial 101**

Use this number for:

- ▶ General Enquiries.
- ▶ To report a crime that has already taken place.
- ▶ When you need the Police to attend to assist in non-emergency situations.

Non emergency crimes include burglary, theft, criminal damage/vandalism, theft from motor vehicles, pick pocketing.

## **How to report a crime anonymously**

If you want to report a crime, but for some reason you do not want to be identified to the police, you can report the crime to Crimestoppers.

The Police will not trace your call and you won't have to give a statement or go to court.





[www.capt.org.uk](http://www.capt.org.uk) or 02076 083 828

As children grow up they may slip, fall, and tumble. As they explore they may pick up things or put their hands in places they shouldn't. To ensure that our children are safe and to avoid any serious injuries or even death we can encourage a safe environment by taking simple safety measures.

### **Child safety information can be found at:**

The Child Accident Prevention Trust (CAPT) is the UK's leading charity working to reduce the number of children and young people killed, disabled or seriously injured in accidents. We exist because accidents are a leading cause of death and serious injury for children and young people. Many of these accidents can be prevented.

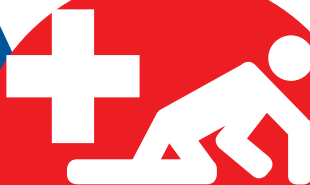
**[www.capt.org.uk](http://www.capt.org.uk)**

Each day, around 45 toddlers are taken into hospital because they've had a serious fall.

**For instance, did you know that:**



**Falls are one of the most common causes of childhood accidents**



**Six toddlers are admitted to hospital every day because they've been badly burned**



**Many accidents can be prevented in just one minute, by moving dangerous objects out of a child's reach**



**[www.rospa.com](http://www.rospa.com)**

### **Child safety**

A big part of RoSPA's mission is to stop children being accidentally killed or injured.

As part of RoSPA campaign to protect society's most vulnerable, is the offer of advice, information and resources for safety practitioners, parents, teachers and other professionals who work with children about child safety on the road, in the home and at play.



## 46 Tenants' rights and responsibilities

Many people within the West Midlands live in a council owned property, a housing association property or rent from a private landlord. As a tenant you have a responsibility for the property you rent, but your landlord is also responsible for maintaining the property.

### **Landlords' responsibilities**

Landlords can enter your property to inspect or to carry out repairs. However you must be informed in advance, usually 24 hours beforehand. For emergency repairs, e.g. water leaks, this doesn't apply.

Landlords are responsible for repairs to the outside of the property or structure (walls, chimney, roof, guttering, drains and maintenance of the gas, water and electricity supply). They are also responsible for:

- ▶ Heating/hot water systems.
- ▶ Maintenance of communal (shared) areas.
- ▶ Ensuring in following bullet points that the furniture provided meets British fire standards.
- ▶ That there are working smoke alarms in the property.
- ▶ That gas appliances such as fires, cookers and boilers and all have Gas Safe certificates.





## Tenancy Agreement

It is not a legal requirement for Landlords to provide you with a tenancy agreement. Most landlords will provide you with one especially in council or housing association properties. Even if you do not have a tenancy agreement it is your right to know:

- ▶ How much rent you have to pay and when it is due.
- ▶ How much deposit you need to pay.
- ▶ The amount of notice you must give should you want to leave.
- ▶ The services/bills you will need to pay.

## Meeting Safety Standards

Landlords must make sure that all gas and electrical equipment in your property has been safely installed and is maintained. They must also follow fire safety regulations - for example, by checking that their tenants have

access to escape routes at all times.

Any repairs or maintenance to the gas supply or gas appliances must be carried out by a Gas Safe registered engineer. Your landlord must arrange for a yearly maintenance check of gas pipe work, appliances and flues. Your landlord should provide you with a copy of these checks if you ask.

Your landlord is responsible for the maintenance of the electricity supply and light fittings, plug sockets etc. Your landlord should get an electrical engineer to check these about every 5 years.

If your property is furnished then your landlord must check that any furniture they supply, meets fire regulations. They must also ensure that your smoke alarm is working and that if there is a fire you can escape easily.

# 48 Tenants' responsibilities

## **Paying Bills**

Normally, you will be responsible for bills, e.g. gas, electricity, water, council tax and TV licence. Check your tenancy agreement to see what you are responsible for.

If you do not pay for services you could be cut off and may have to pay extra for services to be reconnected.

## **Taking care of the property**

You will have some responsibility for looking after the property, and if you cause damage you may have to pay for the repairs or buy a replacement item.

You will be responsible for cleaning and doing general maintenance to the property such as washing windows, checking smoke alarms are working, changing light bulbs etc.

If you wish to decorate the property, take in a lodger or keep pets you should seek the approval of your landlord.

## **Anti Social Behaviour**

You should not behave in a way that could cause upset or annoy your neighbours.

Antisocial behaviour includes having the stereo or TV on too loud, not controlling pets or children, piling up rubbish or generally behaviour of an unacceptable manner.

If you do continue to behave in this way you may be issued with an Injunction to Prevent Nuisance and Annoyance (IPNA) and be evicted from your property.

## **What should you do if you have a problem with your property/landlord?**

There are many sources of information which may help you solve a dispute with your landlord. You can contact your local housing team, Citizens Advice Bureau or council for advice. Alternatively [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) can provide you with more information.





## Loan Sharks

**Don't get involved with a loan shark...  
it will cost you an arm and a leg**

Have you or anyone you know:

- ▶ Been offered a cash loan without paperwork?
- ▶ Been threatened when you couldn't pay?
- ▶ Had your benefit or bank card taken from you?
- ▶ Had a loan which keeps growing even though you are making payments?

If you can answer yes to the above you may have been bitten by a Loan Shark.

**See page 71** for contact information.



## 50 At your home: bogus callers

Bogus callers are people who try to con their way into your home to steal from you or trick you out of money. They might pretend to be an official from your Gas or Electricity Company, a salesperson or a charity worker, or they might claim they are conducting a survey. It may even be someone with a hard luck story asking to borrow a few pounds or to use your telephone in an emergency.

### How can I avoid being scammed?

Remember, you don't have to let any stranger into your home. If you decide to answer the door, remember to take the following steps.

- ▶ **Lock** – Lock all your other outer doors before you go to the front door. Some burglars work together – one keeps you chatting on the doorstep while another gets in through a back door.
- ▶ **Stop** – Think about whether you're expecting anyone.
- ▶ **Chain** – Put the door chain on (don't keep the chain on all the time as it will prevent anyone with a key, such as a home help, from entering). Look through the window or spy-hole to see who's there.

- ▶ **Check** – Ask for an identity card and examine it carefully. If you've seen identification, but are still unsure, check who they are by phoning the company they represent. Get the number from a bill or your phone book rather than calling a number they give you as they could be putting you through to an accomplice.

### Avoiding scams

You can always ask the caller to come back at another time when someone will be with you or tell them to write to you to arrange an appointment. A genuine caller won't mind you taking these precautions. If you don't want to be disturbed by cold callers, consider putting a 'no cold callers' sign on your door.

### I need some help

If you're suspicious, or the caller won't leave, dial 999 and ask for the police. If you don't feel you're in immediate danger but you want to report the incident, call the police on the non-emergency number 101.

**You can always ask the caller to come back at another time when someone will be with you or tell them to write to you to arrange an appointment.**



There are many people who go for days without seeing or talking to anyone. They may be bereaved, isolated, housebound or caring for someone else and just want to hear a friendly voice at the end of the phone.

That's where The Silver Line can help.

## **We are The Silver Line**

A confidential, free helpline offering information, friendship and advice for older people, open every day and night of the year. There is no question too big, no problem too small and no need to be alone.

## **If you're feeling lonely**

It's important to remember you're not alone. More than half of people over 75 live by themselves. One in ten suffers intense loneliness but is reluctant to ask for help. It could happen to any one of us but you don't have to live with that loneliness.

## **Always at the end of the phone 24 hours a day**

Our Silver Line team is there for you. They can offer you friendship, someone to talk to, someone who cares; and, if you

would like to, we can link you to local groups and services in your area.

## **Call in confidence and for free**

You can tell us how you feel and express feelings about your life with complete honesty knowing that your call is treated in the strictest confidence.

We always trust and respect your privacy but if you feel vulnerable, neglected or abused, then with your permission, we'll guide you to organisations that will help. We work with safeguarding organisations like Action on Elder Abuse and local safeguarding teams.

## **No problem is too big or too small**

If you're home alone or feel you have no-one to turn to, don't struggle with loneliness.

Even if all you need is information or advice, pick up the phone. We will be there for you.



Calls are free

**0800 4 70 80 90**

Or from a mobile at local rate

**0300 4 70 80 90**

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

## 52 Environmental responsibilities

As a resident of the West Midlands you have a responsibility to help keep our environment clean and dispose of rubbish and unwanted items in the correct way.

### Refuse Collection

Household rubbish is usually collected on a weekly basis. It is your responsibility to put out your own rubbish bags or wheelie bins. These should be put out no earlier than 6pm the night before collection and no later than 6am the day of collection.

### Doorstep Recycling

Doorstep recycling schemes run throughout the West Midlands. The council will provide you with either boxes or wheelie bins to put recyclable items and garden waste in. These are usually collected on alternate weeks.

The types of items you are able to recycle are: Plastic bottles, drinks cans, cardboard boxes, newspapers, paper, food cans and magazines.

Your local council will be able to provide you with details of the recycling scheme in your area.

### Bulky Items

If you have bulky items which need disposing of such as furniture, cookers, beds etc your local council will not collect this with your normal rubbish collection.

If you are able to transport the item, take it to your local Household Recycling Centre. This is a free of charge service and they will dispose of the item for you. [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) will be able to tell you where the nearest centre to you is.

If you are unable to transport the item yourself, the council will collect the item. Please be aware there may be a charge for this. [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) can provide you with the number you need to call for this.



Is your home or business at 'risk' of flooding?

Find out now: call Floodline - **0345 988 1188** or visit  
**[www.environment-agency.gov.uk/floodmidlands](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/floodmidlands)**.

You can also check whether you are eligible for the Environment Agency's free 24 hour flood warning service



**If you are at risk, there's a lot you can do to prepare before a flood happens.**

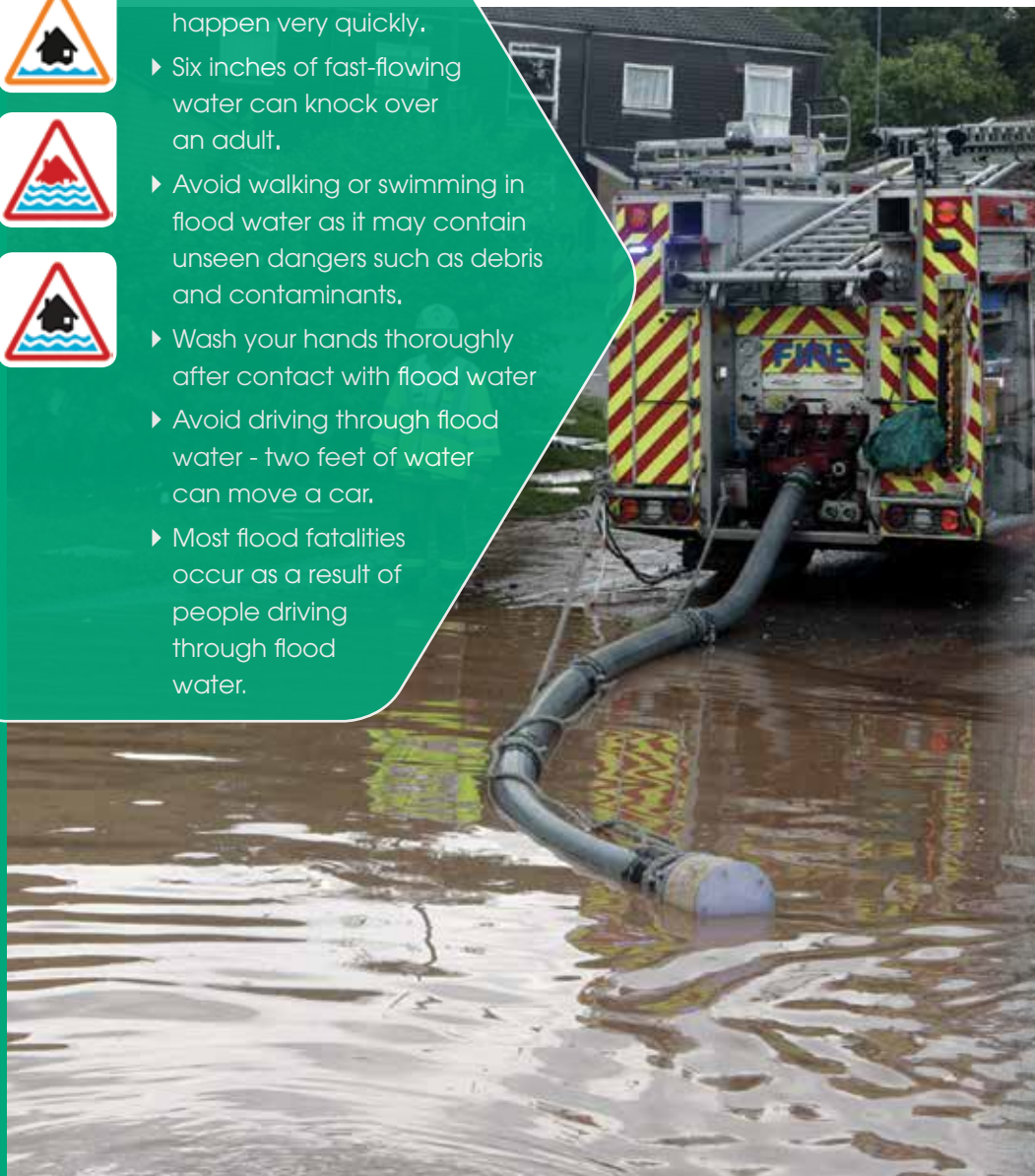
1. Make a personal flood plan.
2. Prepare a flood kit of essential items.
3. Check your insurance cover.
4. Make a list of important contact numbers.
5. Know how to turn off your gas, electricity and water mains.
6. Move important or irreplaceable items such as documents and photographs to a safe place.
7. Think about other items you would move to safety during a flood (medicines, pets, electrical items, cars).

**Check the Environment Agency website for more help and ideas on how to protect yourself and your home. Even if your property is not shown to be at risk from river flooding be aware - floods can happen anyway and affect anyone.**

## Flood water is dangerous



- ▶ Flash flooding can happen very quickly.
- ▶ Six inches of fast-flowing water can knock over an adult.
- ▶ Avoid walking or swimming in flood water as it may contain unseen dangers such as debris and contaminants.
- ▶ Wash your hands thoroughly after contact with flood water
- ▶ Avoid driving through flood water - two feet of water can move a car.
- ▶ Most flood fatalities occur as a result of people driving through flood water.







## Spot the dangers!

Water may look safe, but it can be dangerous. Learn to spot and keep away from dangers. You may swim well in a warm indoor pool, but that does not mean that you will be able to swim in cold water.

## The dangers of water include:

- ▶ it is very cold.
- ▶ there may be hidden currents.
- ▶ it can be difficult to get out (steep slimy banks).
- ▶ it can be deep.
- ▶ there may be rubbish hidden, e.g. shopping trolleys, broken glass.
- ▶ there are no lifeguards.
- ▶ it is difficult to estimate depth.
- ▶ it may be polluted and make you ill.

## Take safety advice!

Special flags and notices may warn you of danger. Know what the signs mean and do what they tell you.

## Go together!

Children should always go with an adult, not by themselves.

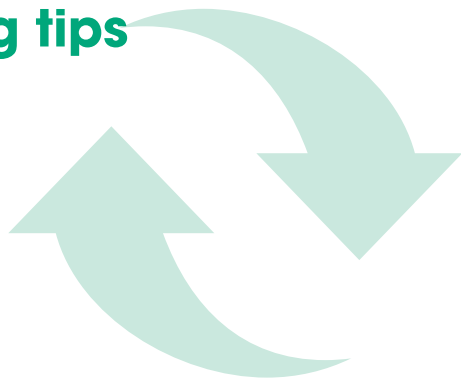
An adult can point out dangers or help if somebody gets into trouble.

## Learn how to help!

You may be able to help yourself and others if you know what to do in an emergency.

If you see someone in difficulty, tell somebody, preferably a Lifeguard if there is one nearby, or go to the nearest telephone, dial 999, ask for the Police at inland water sites and the Coastguard at the beach.

## 56 Free energy saving tips within the home



To support our environment this simple advice can help our communities by taking action on climate change to protect and enhance the environment. This information helps reduce your carbon footprint.

These interventions cost nothing but saves money, energy and the planet:

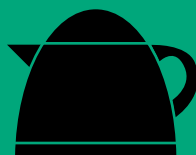
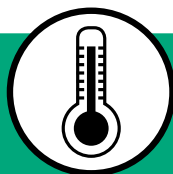
- ▶ Don't leave appliances on standby and remember not to leave laptops and mobile phones on charge unnecessarily.
- ▶ Always turn off the lights when you are last to leave a room.
- ▶ If possible turn your thermostat down. Reducing your room temperature by 1°C could cut your heating bills by up to 10 percent.



# Free energy saving tips within the home

57

- ▶ Is your water too hot? Your cylinder thermostat should be set at 60°C/140°F.
- ▶ Close your curtains at dusk to stop heat escaping through the windows and check for draughts around windows and doors.
- ▶ If possible, fill up the washing machine, tumble dryer or dishwasher: one full load uses less energy than two half loads.
- ▶ Only boil as much water as you need (but remember to cover the elements if you're using an electric kettle).
- ▶ A dripping hot water tap wastes energy and in one week wastes enough hot water to fill half a bath, so fix leaking taps and make sure they're fully turned off!
- ▶ When replacing lightbulbs use energy saving lightbulbs. They last up to 10 times longer than ordinary bulbs.





# STOPPING SMOKING

## THE BENEFITS OF QUITTING

**20 minutes**

Blood pressure and pulse return to normal. Circulation improves especially in hands and feet.

**8 hours**

Blood oxygen levels increase to normal and your chances of having a heart attack start to fall.

**24 hours**

Carbon monoxide leaves the body. Lungs start to clear out the mucus and debris.

**48 hours**

Your body is now nicotine free. Your sense of taste and smell begin to improve.

**72 hours**

Breathing is easier and your energy levels increase.

**2-12 weeks**

Circulation improves throughout the body. Walking and exercise get easier.

**3-9 months**

Breathing problems, coughing, shortness of breath and wheezing improve. Lung efficiency improved by 5-10%.

**5 years**

Risk of having a heart attack falls to about half that of a smoker.

**10 years**

Risk of lung cancer falls to about half that of a smoker. Risk of heart attack is about the same as someone who has never smoked.

# If you need medical help fast, but it is not life threatening – call



## What is ?

If you need medical help fast but it's not a life-threatening situation, you can now call the new NHS 111 number. When you call 111, a trained adviser will ask you questions to find out what's wrong, give you medical advice and direct you to someone who can help you, like an out-of-hour doctor or a community nurse.

If the adviser thinks your condition is more serious, they will direct you to hospital or send an ambulance. If you don't speak English, tell the adviser what language you want to speak and they will get you an interpreter. You can call 111 any time of the day. The call is free.

## When do I use it?

You should only call 999 in an emergency – for example, when someone's life is at risk or someone is seriously injured or critically ill.

Call 111 if you need medical help fast, but it's not life-threatening – for example, if you:

- think you need to go to hospital
- don't know who to call for medical help
- don't have a GP to call
- need medical advice or reassurance about what to do next

For health needs that are not urgent, you should call your GP.

If a health professional has given you a number to call for a particular condition, you should continue to use that number.

## Who can use it?

The NHS 111 number is currently only available in certain areas of England.

If you're outside of these areas, you should call NHS Direct on 0845 4647.



## More information

For more information on where the NHS 111 service is available or to get this leaflet in other languages, visit [www.nhs.uk/111](http://www.nhs.uk/111)

# 60 How to avoid falls

## Potential problems

As we grow older, we become less physically able, almost without noticing. It is important to be aware of these changes, then take action well in advance to make sure they don't lead to fall accidents.

At any time of life, a fall can cause serious injury, loss of mobility and independence. The older we get, the harder we fall.

## Common causes

- ▶ Temporary loss of balance.
- ▶ Attempting to bend too low.
- ▶ Stretching too high.
- ▶ Stand up too quickly.

## Simple solutions

Everyday items could be kept within easy reach on racks or in drawers rather than using cupboards that are too high or low.

- ▶ Gripping something firm with one hand to steady yourself when bending or reaching up
- ▶ A letter box cage, and a shelf or upturned box for milk deliveries.
- ▶ Power points moved to a comfortable height for you.
- ▶ Pausing for a moment before getting out of a chair or bed.
- ▶ Strong lightweight step ladders for high level jobs like curtain hanging or changing light bulbs.
- ▶ You need to plan to avoid temptation

## Balance

Everybody loses their balance or trips occasionally, but with something steady to hold onto you could avoid a painful accident.

## Simple solutions

- ▶ Have a firm handrail on both sides of the stairs.
- ▶ Bath rails need to be strong and in the right position for you by the bath, shower and toilet.
- ▶ Consider what you can hold onto in the kitchen. If there is nothing, fix a sturdy rail or grab handle.
- ▶ Have a chair or flat surface ready to sit on in the kitchen and bedroom just in case you feel faint.

## Safety Tips

- ▶ Keep yourself hydrated by drinking water/liquids, at least little and often. Especially when you are feeling unwell.
- ▶ Keep warm

## Tripping and slipping

Be aware that our reactions get slower as we age, just enough sometimes to turn a minor trip into a nasty fall.

## Unable to see properly

Our eyesight tends to get worse, or slower to react to light and darkness, as we get older.

## Simple solutions

A fresh look at your home to spot areas where you could trip. Could you move around more freely if you rearranged the furniture, for example?

- ▶ Remove loose rugs from walkways.
- ▶ Changing the habit of putting “things to go up” on the stairs.
- ▶ Doing away with slippery floors. There are good kitchen and bathroom carpets these days. Clean up spills straight away.
- ▶ Strong non-slip shoes.
- ▶ More care on the garden path.
- ▶ Buy rock salt before the winter frosts.

## Simple solutions

Why not change your light bulbs from 60 to 100 watts? It will hardly affect the running costs.

- ▶ A bedside light which is easy to switch on in the dark.
- ▶ Two-way light switches at the top and bottom of the stairs.
- ▶ Give yourself time to get used to bifocal glasses when you get them.
- ▶ Take special care on the stairs.
- ▶ Please use your lights. Don't creep around in the dark. It's better and cheaper in the long run to use lights than to have a fall.

## 62 Healthy eating

- ▶ About 8 in 10 deaths from major diseases, for example cancer and coronary heart disease are linked to choices people make in their lives, such as smoking and not eating healthily.
- ▶ Reducing salt intake to the recommended 6gms a day for adults would contribute to a 17% reduction in high blood pressure in the UK population.  
(BHF, 2006)
- ▶ 1 in 5 Britons eats the recommended 5 portions of fruit and vegetables a day.

(World Cancer Research Fund)



## 5 'TOP TIPS' TO...

### Eat more healthily.

1. Compare your diet to the Eatwell plate, how does it compare?
2. Eat more fruit and vegetables. It doesn't have to be expensive, remember tinned, frozen and dried fruit and vegetables are good and it's also cheaper to eat foods in season.
3. Most of our salt intake comes from processed foods, try to reduce these and check food labels.
4. You can reduce fat in your diet in a number of ways, cut off visible fat from meat, spread fats more thinly, cut down on fatty and sugary snacks, choose lower fat options, use less fat when cooking.
5. Fish is a good food, oily fish such as: sardines and mackerel are inexpensive too.

### Is the Eatwell for me

This does not apply to children under the age of 2 because they have different nutritional needs.

Anyone with special dietary requirements or medical needs should check with a registered dietitian or their GP services whether the 'Eatwell Plate' is suitable for them.





Eat well Move more Live longer

[www.nhs.uk/change4life](http://www.nhs.uk/change4life)

- ▶ 70% of the population are not active enough to benefit their health, that is 6 in 10 men and 7 in 10 women.

(BHF, 2007)

- ▶ Almost 40% of deaths from coronary heart disease are due to inactivity.

(BHF, 2007)

- ▶ Increasing physical activity levels in the population will have a positive impact on the prevention of illness and quality of life.
- ▶ Increased physical activity has a positive impact on reducing stress, improving sleep and increasing social activity and self-esteem.
- ▶ In Coventry only 20% of people are active enough to benefit their health.

(Lifestyle Comparators, 2008)

### 5 'TOP TIPS' FOR...

Increasing your physical activity.  
It's easier than you think!





1. Try to reduce time spent just sitting.
2. Increase your everyday activity: hand wash your car, do more housework and gardening.
3. Choose the stairs not the lift and aim to climb them 10 times a day.
4. Take a couple of lunchtime walks in your week, you could use a step-o-meter to count your daily steps.
5. Park in the space furthest away from the supermarket.

NB. Certain people with health conditions should be advised to check with their GP before taking exercise.

Split it into smaller times...

...to fit within your daily routine.

- ▶ Adults should aim to be moderately active for 30 minutes on 5 (or more) days of the week.
- ▶ For children the message is one hour of moderate activity each day.
- ▶ The 30 minutes can be broken down into 3x10 or 2x15 minute slots.
- ▶ 'Moderate' describes an activity that will slightly increase your heart rate and makes you feel warmer.
- ▶ Whilst being active you should be able to talk comfortably.
- ▶ Walking is a great way to be more active in day to day life.



**For more information and support visit**

**change4life**

**[www.nhs.uk/change4life](http://www.nhs.uk/change4life)**

**British Heart Foundation**

**[www.bhf.org.uk](http://www.bhf.org.uk)**

# 66 Drug Use and Classifications

**In the UK it is against the law to use, possess, manufacture or supply any controlled substances.**

**Some people take drugs for many different reasons including**

- ▶ Enjoyment.
- ▶ Because their friends take drugs.
- ▶ Boredom.
- ▶ They believe it to be fashionable.
- ▶ They can buy them cheaply.
- ▶ Curiosity.
- ▶ To escape traumas or problems.

**People who take drugs do not always have an understanding of the risks/ effects of the drugs they are taking. Side effects of drug taking can include**

- ▶ Heart attacks.
- ▶ Strokes.
- ▶ Breathing problems.
- ▶ Hepatitis or HIV through injecting drugs.
- ▶ Overdoses.
- ▶ Depression, anxiety and paranoia.
- ▶ Addiction to the drug.
- ▶ Affects their co-ordination and sense of danger. They may be more likely to have an accident.



If you are caught in possession of, using, manufacturing or supplying drugs you are breaking the law and could face imprisonment and/or a fine. The table below shows you some examples of the sentence or fine you could expect.

Drug Classifications		Maximums Penalties	
Class	Examples	Possession	Supply and production
Class A	Crack Cocaine, Cocaine, Ecstasy (MDMA), Heroin, LSD Magic Mushrooms, Methadone Methamphetamine (Crystal Meth)	7 years in prison an unlimited fine or both	Up to life in prison, an or unlimited fine or both
Class B	Amphetamines (speed), Barbituates, Cannabis, Codeine, Ketamine, Methylphenidate (Ritalin), synthetic cannabinoids, Synthetic cathinones) eg mephedrone, methoxetamine)	5 years in prison an unlimited fine or both	Up to 14 years in prison, an or unlimited fine or both
Class C	Anabolic Steroids, Minor Tranquillizers, Rohypnol, GHB(Gamma-Hydroxybutyric acid), .	5 years in prison an unlimited fine or both (except anabolic steroids - it's not an offence to possess them for personal use)	Up to 14 years in prison, an or unlimited fine or both
Temporary Class Drugs*		None, but police can take away a suspected temporary class drug	Up to 14 years in prison, an or unlimited fine or both

### How would I know if someone close to me has a problem with drugs?

Look out for signs such as

- ▶ Sudden changes in mood,
- ▶ Loss of appetite,
- ▶ Suspicious behaviour,
- ▶ Lack of interest in hobbies,
- ▶ Missing school/work,
- ▶ Money going missing,
- ▶ Sleepiness or drowsiness.

**What should I do if someone close to me is taking drugs?**

- ▶ Don't panic.
- ▶ Don't blame yourself.
- ▶ Learn about drugs.
- ▶ Talk to them, listen and give them support.
- ▶ Don't bully, lecture or scare.
- ▶ Remind them of the risks and legal consequences.

**GET HELP**

**FRANK**

- ▶ A universally accessible service for anyone wanting help, information or advice about any aspect of drugs.



the helpline  
**0300 123 6600**



Telephone  
**0300 123 1099**

- ▶ It is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year
- ▶ The service is free, confidential and operated by fully trained advisers
- ▶ The service can be accessed through a number of channels including:



Textphone FRANK  
on **0300 123 1099**  
- For people with  
hearing impairments  
or communication  
disabilities



Email via Frank  
website:  
**[www.talktofrank.com](http://www.talktofrank.com)**



**SMS (Text)**  
**82111**



Frank BOT  
(an interactive  
service delivered via  
MSN messenger)

## The low risk weekly guidelines

It can be a bit tricky to understand and remember how much alcohol is in drinks, and how this can affect our health. The low risk guidelines can help with this, if you choose to drink.

No-one can say that drinking alcohol is absolutely safe, but by sticking within these guidelines, you can lower your risk of harming your health if you drink most weeks:

- ▶ Men and women are advised not to regularly drink more than 14 units a week.
- ▶ Spread your drinking over three days or more if you drink as much as 14 units a week.

If you want to cut down how much you're drinking, a good way to help achieve this is to have several drink-free days each week.

## Counting the units

Once you've got the hang of the low-risk guidelines, then check how many units are in your usual tipple. "ABV" means the percentage of alcohol in the drink and you can often find this information on the side of the bottle or can. The amount of alcohol in drinks can vary quite widely, and it's worth looking for versions of your favourite drinks that have less alcohol, which can also be cheaper and often have less calories.

## Glass of red, white or rose wine

(ABV 13%)

Small 125ml glass

Standard 175ml

large 250ml glass



1.6 units



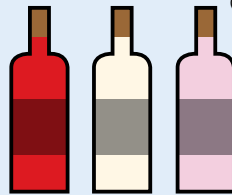
2.3 units



3.3 units

## 750ml bottle of red, white or rose wine

(ABV 13.5%)



**10 units**  
per bottle

## Beer, lager and cider

**Regular**  
(ABV 4%)


lager

**1.8 units**

**2.3 units**
**Strong**  
(ABV 5.2%)


lager

**2.2 units**

**3 units**
**Extra strong**  
(ABV 8%)


lager

**3.5 units**

**4.5 units**

## Other drinks (ABV varies)

**25ml single spirit and mixer**  
(ABV 40%)

**1 unit**
**275ml bottle of alcopop**  
(ABV 5.5%)

**1.5 units**

**Medical warning:** if you have physical withdrawal symptoms (like shaking, sweating, or feeling anxious until you have a first drink of the day), you should take medical advice before stopping completely as it can be dangerous to do this too quickly without proper advice and support.

Useful No's

GP .....

Dentist .....

Opticians .....

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## Contacts

### West Midlands Fire Service

0800 389 5525

### Refugee Council

3 Stone Road, Edgbaston

Birmingham, B15 2HH

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

Tel: 0121 446 5118

Fax: 0121 440 2868

### British Red Cross

Bradbury House,

7 Lowe Street, Camp Hill

Birmingham, B12 0ER

0121 766 5444

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

### National Grid 24 hour

### Gas Emergency Service

0800 111 999

### Severn Trent Water

0800 783 4444 (24hr emergency)

### ChildLine

0800 11 11

### The Silver Line

### (Helpline for older people)

0800 4 70 80 90

(24 hours a day, every day)

## Websites

### General advice

on all aspects of life in the United Kingdom

[www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)

### Health Advice

[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

### Highway Code

[www.gov.uk/highway-code](http://www.gov.uk/highway-code)

### Housing Advice

<https://www.gov.uk/browse/housing/council-housing-association>

### Citizens Advice Bureau

<http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/>

### Driving

Driving and Vehicle Licensing Agency

<http://www.gov.co.uk/contact-the-dvla>

### West Midlands Police

<http://www.west-midlands.police.uk/>

## Loan Sharks Information

For confidential help and advice contact the Illegal Money Lending Team **0300 555 2222**

(local call rates, including inclusive minutes from mobiles)

Email: [reportaloanshark@stoploansharks.gov.uk](mailto:reportaloanshark@stoploansharks.gov.uk)

Text: **loan (space) shark (space) + your message to 60003.**

Web: [www.gov.uk/report-loan-shark](http://www.gov.uk/report-loan-shark)



# **In an Emergency dial 999 or 112**

## **For Non Emergencies contact:**

### **Smell Gas**

**0845 835 1111**

**[www.carbonmonoxidesafety.org.uk](http://www.carbonmonoxidesafety.org.uk)**

### **Environmental Agency**

**03708 506 506**

**<http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/>**

### **NHS**

**111**

**<http://www.nhs.uk/>**

### **Samaritans**

**Birmingham**

**0121 666 6644**

**Solihull**

**0121 704 2255**

**Walsall**

**0192 262 4000**

**Brierley Hill**

**01384 781118**

**Coventry**

**0247 667 8678**

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