



[www.swindon.gov.uk/housing](http://www.swindon.gov.uk/housing)

# Fire Safety in Flats

**Please  
take time  
to read  
this Fire  
Safety  
leaflet -  
it could  
save your  
life!**



*Housing*



**SWINDON**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

# Help us reduce the risk of fire in communal (shared) areas of flats

Housing takes fire safety very seriously, and we regularly do fire risk assessments on communal areas of buildings where we have flats. We need your help to ensure your flat and the communal areas of your building stay risk free. This leaflet lists the most common fire dangers in communal areas and how to prevent them.

## Don't use communal areas for storage

Anything stored in a communal area is a fire risk. In flats, the staircase is one of the main escape routes from a building, and people could trip over objects left on or under staircases; including the Fire and Rescue Service Team which will be trying to assist you.

Items should not be stored under or on stairs and landings, as they may cause or feed a fire. Only store items in designated storage areas.



## Don't put furniture in communal areas

We understand you want your building to look attractive, but please do not put rugs, pot plants or furniture in communal areas.

They can be a fire risk, and may make it difficult for residents to escape during a fire.



## Don't store flammable items in communal areas

Flammable materials and liquids such as fuel, paper, domestic waste and furniture can speed up the spread of fire and hinder your escape.

Don't  
smoke in  
communal  
areas



## Don't wedge open communal area doors

Communal or meter cupboard doors left wedged open can help a fire to spread and hinder your escape.

## Don't fit locks on communal doors

Residents should not fit any locks on communal landing doors. Fitting unnecessary locks can prevent escape and hinder a rescue by the fire service.

## Don't replace the internal doors in your flat

All the doors we install in our flats comply with fire regulations and are the right thickness and quality to protect residents from fire. If you want to replace your front door or a door inside your flat, please contact your Neighbourhood Housing Officer first (details on the back of this leaflet).

## Don't make any alterations to your fire doors

Fitting a cat-flap or letterbox in a fire door makes it less fire resistant. If you are unsure whether a door is a fire door, please ask your Neighbourhood Housing Officer (details on the back of this leaflet).



## Here are some more top tips that will help you, to keep you and your neighbours safe:

1. **Don't** leave candles unattended
2. **Don't** leave cooking unattended
3. **Don't** overload sockets
4. **Don't** use communal areas for storage
5. **Don't** put furniture in communal areas
6. **Don't** smoke in communal areas
7. **Don't** allow communal doors to be wedged open
8. **Don't** store flammable items in communal areas
9. **Don't** fit extra locks to communal doors
10. **Don't** make alterations to fire doors
11. **Don't** replace the doors in your flat without permission
12. **Don't** tamper with fire safety equipment.

If fire safety equipment, such as a smoke alarm or hose is damaged or seems to have been tampered with, please report it immediately to Housing on 01793 445503

**Do** check smoke alarms regularly

**Do** remain vigilant and report suspicious behaviour to your Neighbourhood Housing Officer.

**Do** keep your front access door closed at all times, even in hot weather

Please **do** make yourself familiar with the Fire Evacuation procedure on page 6.



The following evacuation strategy has been designed with your safety in mind. **Please take time to read it.**

## **Flats - Prepare to Evacuate**

Each flat has been designed to be a fire resistant compartment, so if there is a fire in another part of the block, you should:

- Stay in your flat
- Close all windows and doors and **prepare** to evacuate
- Wait for instructions from Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service (WFRS)
- If heat or smoke is affecting your flat, leave the flat closing all windows and doors behind you.

### **If a fire breaks out in your flat:**

- Leave the room straight away, along with anyone else, and close the door
- Tell everyone else in your flat about the fire and get them to leave, and close the front door
- Contact the fire and rescue service, when safe to do so by dialling 999

**Don't stay behind to put the fire out.  
If you have to leave the building, use the stairs.**

### **If the fire is in the flat next to yours, or directly below:**

- Tell everyone else in your flat about the fire and get them to leave, and close the front door
- If you have to leave the building, use the stairs.

If you have any concerns or queries please speak to your Neighbourhood Housing Officer.

## Communal Areas - Evacuate

(Corridors, Stairways, Bin Areas, etc.)

All residents, guests, staff and contractors in communal areas during a fire alarm activation are to evacuate the building immediately and make their way to a safe place.

Residents must not return to their flats until WFRS have said so.

## Keeping you safe...



If you are unable to hear smoke alarms, please let us know.

As a tenant of a flat, you are probably already aware of the work Housing has been doing, supported by Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service, to enhance fire safety in communal areas such as hallways, staircases, landings and corridors.

We are certainly very grateful to the huge number of residents who have co-operated with us by removing various obstructions and combustible materials from these communal areas. **Please read our safety tips (pg5) to help keep you safe.**

Housing has a running programme of Fire Safety Risk Assessments, in all of our buildings that have communal areas, including sheltered housing and all other high and low rise blocks.



***“Wiltshire is by far one of the safest counties to live in nationwide and this is in no small part due to the close working relationship maintained between Swindon Borough Council, Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service and the tenants who reside within.”***

**Fraser Drummond,  
Fire Safety Inspector.**

**Think about safety!**

**Help us keep you, your family and your neighbours safe from the risk of fire.**

**You can obtain a FREE Home Safety check from Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Services by phoning  
Tel: 0800 389 7849 or visit: [www.wiltshire.gov.uk](http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk)**

**If you have any concerns or queries please speak to your Neighbourhood Housing Officer or Neighbourhood Wardens.**

**Tel: 01793 445503**

**Email: [Housing@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:Housing@swindon.gov.uk)**

This information is available on the internet at: [www.swindon.gov.uk/housing](http://www.swindon.gov.uk/housing)  
It can be produced in a range of languages and formats (such as large print, Braille or other accessible formats) by contacting the Customer Services Department.

**Tel: 01793 445500 Fax: 01793 463331 Email: [customerservices@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:customerservices@swindon.gov.uk)**