



Home Safety

Safety at home is a fundamental concern. Sometime it can be easy to forget that we still live among potential safety hazards. Below are tips on how to manage some of the main hazards found in the home:

Fire

Fire Alarms

- Ensure fire alarms are installed on all levels of your home at a minimum. Your sense of smell does not work when you are asleep and smoke can put you in a deeper sleep.
- Test your fire alarms once a week and change the batteries at least annually. If you have 10-year smoke alarms, you need to replace the whole alarm after 10 years.
- Vacuum the smoke alarms regularly and wipe the cover. If they get clogged with dust, they may not work properly.
- Pay attention to your emergency exits.

Fire Extinguisher

- Install a fire extinguisher and fire blanket in your home and familiarise yourself with their use.
- Check regularly to verify they are in good working order and up to date.

Smoking

- If smoking is permitted smoking in the house, provide large, stable ashtrays. A burning cigarette end can smoulder for hours before igniting.
- Ensure matches and lighters are out of children's reach.
- Do not smoke if you are feeling sleepy or have taken alcohol.

Candles

- Never leave a burning candle unattended.
- Never burn a candle on or near anything that might catch fire.
- Keep candles out of the reach of children and pets.

Slips, Trips & Falls

- Remove all clutter, such as stacks of old newspapers and magazines, especially from hallways and staircases.
- Secure loose rugs with double-faced tape, tacks or a slip-resistant backing — or remove loose rugs from your home.
- Install brighter light bulbs where needed, particularly in stairways and narrow hallways.
- Ensure cables / leads run along walls and are not running across main walking paths.
- Hold the handrails when you use the stairs, going up or down. If you must carry something while you are on the stairs, hold it in one hand and use the handrail with the other. Do not let what you are carrying block your view of the steps.
- Clean up spills straight away.

Electrical Safety

It is recommended that you carry out electrical basic checks on a regular basis:

- Do not overload sockets. This is a major fire risk.
- You should never nail or staple cables or leads to walls, as this can damage the cable, resulting in electric shock.
- Do not place cables under rugs or carpets, as this can cause overheating. Check there are no burn marks or staining that suggests overheating.
- Switch off and plug out electrical items when you are not using them and prior to inspection.
- If any electrical cables or plugs are damaged, worn or frayed, do not use the electrical item and call a qualified electrician. Never try to repair faulty appliances.
- Never use a plug-in appliance in a bathroom, en-suite or any wet area. The only exception to this rule is specially designed electric shaver outlets.
- Do not use cracked, loose, or damaged sockets or switches.
- Do not handle plugs or switches with wet hands, and never let plugs get wet.
- Do not store any liquids next to anything electrical. The smallest spill could easily lead to a fire.
- Do not trail cables across the cooker, hob or sink.
- Do not try to release jammed toast from a toaster while it is still plugged in.
- Never try to force a 2-pin plug into a 3-pin socket - this can be extremely dangerous. Replace the 2-pin plug with a suitable 3-pin plug top.

Poisoning

Check your home to make sure all poisons are stored safely and out of children's reach. Poisoning can occur with medicines, household products, cosmetics, plants, garden products, chemicals, animals and insects (e.g. wasp stings).

Here are a few things that you can do to prevent accidental poisonings in your home:

- Place your chemicals high up on shelves rather than down low under kitchen and bathroom sinks where people commonly put them. If possible, store them out in a garden shed outside of the house. If you have to put chemicals in low cabinets, use baby proof locks and be sure that you can properly close the doors.
- Keep all products in their original containers.
- Do not leave containers open when using them.
- Do not leave household products unattended while in use.
- Do not mix cleaning products or use two different products at the same time. Some mixtures can produce a toxic gas.
- Do not remove labels from medicines, chemicals or household products.
- If you think your child has been poisoned, call the **Public Poisons Line (ROI) (01) 809 2166** (8am-10pm every day). The signs and symptoms of poisoning can be delayed. Always seek advice!

Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colourless, odourless, tasteless, poisonous gas produced by incomplete burning of carbon-based fuels, including gas, oil, wood and coal. Low exposure to carbon monoxide (CO) can cause headaches and dizziness, while high levels can lead to vomiting, impaired vision, and even death. To prevent carbon monoxide:

- Ensure your appliances are installed and serviced annually by a registered gas installer or a qualified service agent for your fuel type. Make sure vents, flues and chimneys are kept clear.
- Ensure you have carbon monoxide detectors on all levels in your home and test them regularly.
- Make sure the alarm complies with EN 50291, carries a CE mark, has an end of life indicator and carries an independent certification mark. Replace the whole alarm when it reaches this expiry date.