

## Cooking

- Take care if you need to leave the kitchen while cooking. Take pans off the heat or turn them down to avoid risk
- Avoid leaving children or pets in the kitchen alone when cooking on the hob. Keep matches and saucepan handles out of their reach to keep them safe
- Do not cook if you've been drinking or are too tired, order a takeaway instead
- Take care if you're wearing loose clothing – this can easily catch fire
- Double check the cooker is off when you've finished cooking



## Candles

- Swap your traditional candles for LED candles or LED lights, you'll still get that same warm glow but without a fire risk
- If you are using candles, never leave them unattended and blow them out every time you need to leave the room
- Make sure candles, including tea lights, are secured in a proper holder and are away from materials that may catch fire like curtains
- Children and pets should not be left alone with lit candles
- Do not burn several candles close together as this might cause flaring



## Winter Holidays

- Make sure you have a working smoke alarm on every level of your home and test them regularly
- Check any decorations are in good working order and conform to British Standards
- Don't overload electrical sockets and switch off and unplug decorations before you leave the house or go to bed
- Don't attach decorations to lights or heaters
- Make sure visitors know what to do in an emergency - there's lots of extra stuff in your house when people stay and when you have decorations up, so reassess your escape plan and talk them through it
- Always keep escape routes clear and try not to create piles of things - this can make fire spread much more quickly
- Don't use fake or cheap chargers or cover batteries when they are charging - never charge batteries overnight
- Take the time to check on elderly relatives and neighbours, particularly in cold weather
- If you are going to use fireworks as part of any celebrations this winter, use them responsibly and be sure to follow the firework code



# Enjoy your Winter safely

Winter can be an exciting time – wrapping up on walks, making your home warm and cosy, visiting friends and family and making the most of comforting home cooking.

Essex County Fire and Rescue Service wants everyone that lives, works and travels in Essex to enjoy the winter safely. So follow our advice to keep you and your family safe this winter.

To book a **Home Fire Safety Visit** visit [essex-fire.gov.uk/book](https://essex-fire.gov.uk/book) or call **0300 303 0088**

**In an emergency – call 999**

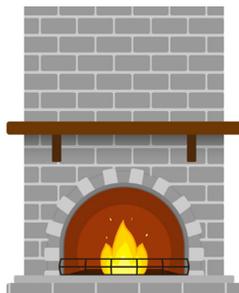
For all of our winter safety advice visit: [essex-fire.gov.uk/winter](https://essex-fire.gov.uk/winter) or scan the QR code below:



## Staying Warm

### Chimneys

- Have your chimney swept at least once a year, or more frequently if you burn wood
- Don't stack fires too high and remember to let them burn down well before you go to bed and close doors at night
- Always use a fire or spark guard
- Don't have anything flammable, such as rugs too close to the fire
- Inspect your chimney regularly – particularly in the roof space – to make sure sparks or fumes cannot escape through cracks or broken bricks
- Only buy suitable fuels



### Carbon Monoxide

- Carbon Monoxide (CO) is a highly poisonous gas, which you cannot see, taste or smell
- If your home has cooking or heating appliances which do not run off electricity (e.g. gas cooker, gas boiler or open fire), a carbon monoxide alarm should be fitted near each one
- Annual maintenance can prevent carbon monoxide poisoning so book your service now through a reputable provider

### Portable heaters

- Keep heaters away from curtains and furniture and never use them for drying clothes
- Always unplug electric heaters when you go out or go to bed

### Electric blankets

- Never use hot water bottles in the same bed as an electric blanket, even if the blanket is switched off
- Unplug blankets before you get into bed, unless they have a thermostat control for safe all-night use
- Don't leave electric blankets folded as this damages the internal wiring. Store them flat or rolled up instead. Inspect your blanket regularly for any damage or wear

## Bonfires

- Check your Local Authority website to see whether bonfires are allowed in your area
- Site the bonfire well away from houses, garages, sheds, fences, overhead cables, trees and shrubs
- Never leave the bonfire burning unattended
- Build the stack so that it is stable and will not collapse outwards or to one side
- Never use flammable liquids – paraffin or petrol – to light the fire
- Don't burn foam-filled furniture, aerosols, tins of paint and bottles
- Keep everyone away from the fire – especially children and pets
- Pour water on the embers before leaving
- Check the bonfire for pets and wildlife before lighting it



## Winter driving

- Check your car regularly to make sure it's safe to drive - this includes tyres, oil levels and water
- Always prepare for your journey by checking weather updates and road closures before leaving
- Never drive while under the influence of drink or drugs or while using a mobile phone
- Always wear a seatbelt
- Take it slower on the roads in wet and icy weather and leave a larger braking distance between cars
- Never drive into flood water
- Download the what3words app to help you find, share and save your precise location if you do need help from the emergency services while out and about



## Water safety

- If you're heading on a night out near to water, make sure to walk home in pairs and let someone know when you expect to be home
- If you do fall into water unexpectedly, lay on your back with your arms and legs stretched out while the effects of cold water shock pass. If you can, swim back to shore but if you begin to struggle, lay on your back again and shout for help
- If you see someone in difficulty in the water, do not enter the water yourself to rescue them. Dial 999 immediately

