



## **COMMUNITY INFORMATION BULLETIN NO. 12**

### **ELECTRICAL FIRE SAFETY IN THE HOME**

Fires in the home can be caused by faulty electrical appliances, plugs and cables but many occur due to mistakes from homeowners. It is important to be aware of the common causes of fires which involve electricity and the particular danger signs you should look out for around your home.

#### **Plugs and Sockets**

- Hot plugs or sockets, scorch marks, fuses that often blow, or flickering lights are often a sign of loose wiring or other electrical problems.
- Any coloured wires sticking out are a sign of badly wired plugs.
- Plugging too many electrical items into one socket can lead to overheating; try and keep one plug per socket.
- Use trailing leads or bar adaptors rather than block type connectors.

#### **Cables and Leads**

- Make sure the outer covering of all power leads are not frayed or damaged; replace if necessary.
- Badly positioned electrical appliances can make cables trip hazards.
- Never place cables under rugs or carpets where damaged or worn parts will not be noticed.

#### **Appliances and Rechargeable Devices**

- Look for the CE mark when buying electrical equipment.
- Never use electrical appliances in a bathroom due to the risk of electrocution.
- Never allow water to touch electrics - this can cause electrocution or fire.
- Switch off appliances at night unless they are designed to be left on eg, fridge/freezers.
- Hair straighteners can get extremely hot. Switch off after use and leave to cool on a heatproof surface.
- Only buy approved chargers for rechargeable devices; cheaper options may be unsafe.
- Do not over-charge devices and always unplug before going to bed at night.
- Do not charge devices on a flammable surface; this increases the risk of fire spread.
- Servicing of electrical appliances, especially ones that run at high speeds, should be carried out annually by a qualified electrician/engineer.

Use the online '[Socket Overload Calculator](#)' to check if you are being electrical safe.

#### **E-Cigarettes**

- Always follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Take notice of warning signs supplied with the product.
- Do not charge e-cig batteries for long periods of time or leave to charge overnight.
- Look for the CE mark to ensure chargers comply with European Safety Standards.

#### **Electric Blankets**

- Look for the British or European safety mark on electric blankets and follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Unplug before you get into bed, unless it has a thermostat control for safe all-night use.
- Store flat or rolled up to prevent damaging the internal wiring.
- Never use an electric blanket if you have an air flow pressure relief bed.
- Check regularly for wear and tear and replace after 10 years.

The colder months of the year see an increase in the use of portable heating appliances. Therefore it is vitally important to be extra careful around the home.

- Never place heaters too close to combustible surfaces or materials such as curtains or bedding.
- Position heaters safely so they can't be knocked over easily.
- Never dry clothes in front of portable heaters.
- Never cover air vents on fan heaters.
- Never leave heaters on if you have to leave the house.

If an electrical fire starts, you should, if safe to do so, turn off the power immediately. Do not try and tackle an electrical fire with water. Get everyone out of the property, close all doors behind you. Dial 999 and ask for the Fire & Rescue Service.

