



**Northern Ireland
Fire & Rescue Service**

Protecting Our Community

COMMUNITY INFORMATION BULLETIN NO. 37

LIVING ALONE – YOUR FIRE SAFETY

Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service (NIFRS) acknowledges that People at Risk in Northern Ireland will come from all walks of life and will be spread geographically across the Province.

Some of the factors which make people more vulnerable to fire include living with the effects of old age (eg, dementia), being a smoker and increased use of alcohol. More people are also living alone and an increased number of people are being cared for in their own homes.

As the population lives longer, there will be more emphasis on providing support and care in the community to allow people to remain as independent for as long as possible. As a result, the number of people falling within NIFRS' People at Risk categories will increase.

NIFRS carries out Home Fire Safety Checks for People at Risk and we work in partnership with care agencies to help those most vulnerable. People living alone or in rural areas have a higher risk of fires in their home. During a home fire safety check, firefighters will fit smoke alarms, if required, and provide fire safety advice. We also urge families and neighbours to keep an eye out for those living alone, not just during seasonal holidays but all year around to ensure they are safe from the risks of fire.

5 ways to improve fire safety for those living alone:

- Install a smoke alarm on all levels of your property. A working smoke alarm will give you vital time needed to escape a fire. **NEVER** remove the battery or take your alarm off its back plate unless it's to replace the battery or install a new alarm.
- Take care when cooking, especially if you have been drinking alcohol. It's better to install a heat alarm in your kitchen rather than a smoke alarm.
- Never overload electrical sockets; remember one plug per socket.
- Make a fire escape plan - know where you keep door keys at night and keep your escape routes clear.
- Have a bedtime routine - close inside doors at night to stop a fire from spreading, turn off and unplug electrical appliances unless they are designed to be left on and put out candles and cigarettes properly.

Useful Contacts

- Age NI <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/northern-ireland/information-advice/>
- Public Health Agency <https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/news/alcohol-awareness-week-%E2%80%93-do-you-know-your-units>
- NIdirect <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/taxonomy/term/708>
- Drugs and Alcohol NI <https://drugsandalcoholni.info/>
- Inspire Wellbeing <https://www.inspire.com/>
- Samaritans www.samaritans.org or Freephone Helpline number 116 123

Other Community Information Bulletins can be accessed from the NIFRS website.

Remember, if a fire starts, get everyone out of the property and close all doors behind you. Dial 999 and ask for the Fire & Rescue Service.

For further information phone NIFRS HQ 028 9266 4221 or visit www.nifrs.org



#STOPfire