

STAY FIRE SAFE IN YOUR HOME ELECTRICAL APPLIANCE SAFETY

**Creating Homes Strengthening Communities
Services that Matter**

Almost 90% of fires in the home are caused by electrical products. Only 10% of these are caused by faulty wiring. We check the wiring in your home every 5 years.

The 5 main pieces of equipment causing fires in the home are:

- Cooking equipment
- Lighting
- Portable Heating
- TVs
- Laundry Equipment (washing machines and dryers)

By checking your electrical appliances looking for signs of wear and taking a few simple precautions you can reduce the risk of fire in your home.

- Don't store combustible materials e.g. clothes, papers, cleaning materials, close to your electricity meter or fuse box, particularly if this is under the stairs (a means of escape from upper levels in an emergency).
- Don't overload electrical adaptors by plugging too many appliances into one socket, especially those with a high electrical current rating such as kettles, irons and heaters. Visit electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk/overloadingsockets to check that your sockets are safe.
- Check your sockets regularly – if you see burn marks or they feel hot, contact us on 028 9087 6019 and we can check if they need repairing or replacing.

Staying Safe with Electrical Appliances

There are simple steps that you can take to minimise the risk of fire or electric shock when using appliances such as washing machines, tumble dryers, fridge-freezers, and dishwashers:

- Don't overload sockets especially high rated such as kettles, toasters and irons.
- Unplug appliances at night.

“Stop Standby!”, it's safer, its greener and saves you money.

- Always buy from a retailer you can trust and follow the manufacturer's instructions when installing, using and maintaining electrical appliances.
- Don't leave washing machines, tumble dryers or dishwashers running or mobile phones charging overnight or when you are out.
- Hand-held electrical appliances, such as hair dryers and straighteners, get very hot in normal use. Make sure that when you have finished using them, you switch them off, unplug them and put them away, preferably storing hair straighteners and similar beauty products in heat-proof pouches.
- If your appliance begins making a strange noise or isn't working properly, don't ignore it. If you think there might be a problem, always unplug it and contact the manufacturer or a qualified repair technician.
- Don't overload washing machines or tumble dryers – take bulky items like duvets to the dry cleaners.
- Clean the toaster crumb tray regularly.
- Clean tumble dryer vents from lint build up.
- Don't put cables or leads under carpets or rugs.
- Do regular checks of plugs and sockets for burn marks, sounds of 'arcing' (buzzing or crackling), fuses blowing, circuit-breakers tripping or if it feels too hot to touch.
- Don't place a fridge or freezer near cookers, radiators, or in direct sunlight, as it will have to work harder to maintain the required internal temperature.
- Clean behind your fridge and freezer regularly to keep lint and dust from building up, and make sure there is enough room behind the appliance for air to circulate freely.
- Clean your oven and hob regularly and always clear spillages immediately to avoid a build-up of food debris and fat which is a fire risk.
- Clean fat from grill pans, when cold, and scrape into the bin.
- Only use your microwave for food. Always follow the instructions on the packaging and make sure that you only put things in the microwave that are clearly marked as microwave safe.
- Don't use bulbs of a higher wattage than is shown on a lamp.
- Don't block vents of appliances especially heaters.
- Always register your electrical appliances so that the manufacturer can contact you if there's a problem.

Registering Your Products

The average success rate when a manufacturer has an electrical product recall in the UK is just 10-20%.

A lot of the time, the manufacturer has no way of directly contacting those who purchased the item in question. So, every year, millions of potentially unsafe appliances remain in use, putting their owners at risk of electrical shocks, fires or even death.

Registering your product makes it easy for the manufacturer to get in touch with you if there is a problem.

The easiest way to register your product is to register online. In order to register your product, you'll usually need:

- The brand name
- The model (usually either a name or a number)
- The serial number
- The date of purchase (or as near to it as you can remember)

Electrical Safety First's website has a product checker and contains the details of electrical products that have been recalled since 2007. If you have searched for a product that you own and it is not listed, this means that it has not been recalled and should be safe to use. However, we advise you to make sure you register all your home appliances.

Visit www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk/recalls to check that the products in your home are safe.

For more advice about using white goods safely, visit www.whitegoodsafety.com