

# Get a life. Get wise to fire

## Leaving home

If you're going to college or university – or starting your first job – you're probably leaving home for the first time. You might be moving into a flat or halls of residence.

Wherever you go, you'll be responsible for looking after the place you're living in. That means keeping it safe from fire.

It's not just for your own safety. You've also got a responsibility to the people around you. To the community that you're now part of.

Fire safety is just common sense. And making sure you've checked out a few basics could be a life saver.

You're looking forward to having a great time. Keep it that way.

## Hoax calls

Hoax or false alarm calls are sometimes called 'nuisance calls'. But nuisance calls are not harmless fun. Ever.

Firefighters react to every alarm call on their watch. If they're answering a false alarm call, they're not available to deal with a real emergency. That can cost lives.

People who make hoax calls are prosecuted. The penalty is imprisonment, a fine or both.



Visit [www.dontgivefireahome.com](http://www.dontgivefireahome.com) for practical fire safety advice. Or talk to your local firefighters. You'll find contact details on the website, in your local library and in the phone book.

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## Living in halls of residence?

There'll be **automatic fire detectors** in key areas. They're activated by heat or smoke, and sound an alarm. If you hear a fire alarm, get out and stay out.

There'll be **break-glass fire alarms** near exit doors. If you discover a fire – or if you suspect there's a fire – break the glass to sound the fire alarm. That'll warn other students. Then get out and stay out.

There'll be **fire resistant doors** in key areas. When they're shut they protect your escape route from smoke and fire. Never wedge fire doors open. That kills people. It's dangerous to open a door if there's a fire behind it. Touch the handle with the back of your hand. If it's hot, don't open it.

There'll be **fire extinguishers** and **fire blankets** to tackle small fires. But never put yourself in danger. If in doubt, get out and stay out. Phone the fire brigade.

## Living in rented accommodation?

If you're sharing rented accommodation, there's a bigger risk of fire. That's partly because rented accommodation isn't always well maintained.

In rented accommodation always:

- check there are working smoke alarms in the flat and on stairs and landings
- check there are no bars on the windows
- check the labels on the furniture. Furniture made before 1988 won't be heat-resistant. It can catch fire easily and will give off clouds of toxic smoke.

If 3 or more of you are renting/sharing, the landlord must have a licence from the local council for a House of Multiple Occupation. If there's no licence, don't rent the property. Report the landlord to the council.

If it has a licence, it must have:

- smoke/fire alarms to detect and warn of fire
- an emergency plan showing the nearest exit
- an escape route
- fire extinguishers.



## Avoiding false alarms

Most calls to student accommodation are false alarms. Many false alarms are caused by carelessness. Some are deliberate.

**Firefighters answering a false alarm could be delayed in saving lives in a real fire.**

Did you know that smoke detectors can be triggered by:

- aerosol sprays
- candles and incense sticks
- cooking fumes
- steam from bathrooms and irons
- smoking materials.

And smoke detectors are sensitive:

- never use sprays directly under smoke detectors
- never cover a smoke detector head
- keep bathroom doors closed
- take extra care if you use candles or incense sticks\*
- take extra care if you use a portable cooker or heater in your room.\*

(\* in halls of residence, it's probably against your accommodation agreement to use candles/incense sticks and portable cookers/heaters in your room)