



NFCC
National Fire
Chiefs Council

Fire Kills Campaign

Monthly Briefing Pack

October 2023 – Smoke alarm testing

Top tip



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1. Introduction

Welcome to the monthly briefing pack for October, covering smoke alarm testing. This information pack provides details of national activity that may support local fire and rescue services in their local delivery and has been developed and collated by the Home Office Fire Kills team together with the National Fire Chiefs Council.

Personal Light Electric Vehicles

New resources to support fire safety messaging around Personal Light Electric Vehicles (i.e. e-scooters, e-bikes etc) have been created. The Fire Kills team and the NFCC has worked in partnership to develop these resources that focus on safe use, storage and charging of e-bikes and e-scooters in the home. London Fire Brigade offered the #ChargeSafe materials, which have been adopted and slightly adapted into the Fire Kills style for national use.

These materials are available on the Fire Kills Portal [here](#), where you can also download and use complementary resources created by the Office for Product Safety and Standards. Fire safety advice is also now available on the FireEngland.uk site, [here](#).

Fire Kills distribution list

These briefing packs, as well as notifications of campaign opportunities, new materials and resources, are sent to over 200 recipients across all fire and rescue services in England. If you would like to review who in your FRS receives these updates and/or update the list to ensure it goes to all those who would like them, please email [James Webb](#).

Feedback

We hope that these packs support local initiatives and would welcome any feedback on areas for improvement, where we could do more and anything else that you think will be beneficial to fire and rescue services. If you have any feedback or questions on the packs or the campaign more generally, please contact [James Webb](#).

Fire Kills portal

The Fire Kills Portal hosts all the Fire Kills artwork. There is one shared login for all fire and rescue services to access the [Fire Kills Portal](#). For anyone in a local fire and rescue service who wishes to access the Fire Kills material, please use the following login details.



Press templates and social media posts

At the end of this document, you will find template press releases and social media posts associated with the themes and activities included in this pack.

2. Smoke alarm testing messages

The national smoke alarm campaign began in 1988 to encourage people to install smoke alarms in their home. Since 2003, the primary message of the Fire Kills campaign has been to encourage regular testing of smoke alarms and, more recently, this has been joined by encouraging people to have enough smoke alarms in their home. At least one smoke alarm on every floor and test them at least monthly.

Messaging

- You are around nine times more likely to die in a fire if you do not have any working smoke alarms.
- The easiest way to protect your home and family from fire is with working smoke alarms - get them, install them, test them. They could save your life.
- Fit at least one on every level of your home and test them monthly.
- Ten-year sealed battery smoke alarms are the best option. They are slightly more expensive, but you save on the cost of replacing batteries.
- If it is a ten-year alarm, you will need to replace the whole alarm every ten years.
- Never disconnect your alarms or take the batteries out if it goes off by mistake.
- The ideal position to install an alarm is on the ceiling in the middle of a room and on the hallway and landing so you can hear an alarm throughout your home.
- Don't put alarms in or near kitchens or bathrooms where smoke or steam can set them off by accident.
- Testing smoke alarms, tests the smoke sensor as well as the power supply and/or battery.



3. Key Dates

There are a few awareness weeks taking place in October 2023, which you may wish to get involved in to promote relevant fire safety messages.

3.1 National Burn Awareness Day

The Children's Burns Trust is preparing for this year's National Burn Awareness Day on 11 October 2023. The CBT reports that last year, 7,335 children sustained a burn injury requiring specialist burn care. This does not include the thousands of children who presented to A&E or their GP surgery with a burn injury.

National Burn Awareness Day urges parents to keep children safe with essential safety reminders as well as the importance of knowing the right first aid if a burn or scald does occur. The Toolkit will include new case studies to emphasise the theme for 2023 'Hot Water Burns like Fire' with a particular focus on the increase in scalds from hot water bottles. You can subscribe to the Children's Burns Trust Newsletter [here](#) to ensure you receive all the information as soon as it is available.

3.2 Candle Fire Safety Week

Candle Fire Safety Week runs from 23-29 October 2023. The aim of the Week is to raise awareness of the candle fire safety messages and behaviours. With energy bills increasing, there may be an increased use of candles for lighting. The NFCC and Fire Kills produced some guidance and prevention resources in response to the cost of living rises, which are available [here](#).

- Make sure that when in use, candles are secured in a proper holder and away from materials that may catch fire – like curtains.
- Children should not be left alone with lit candles.
- Put candles out when you leave the room, and make sure they're put out completely at night.
- Keep pets away from lit candles



- **Keep the wax pool clear** of wick trimmings, matches and debris always.
- **Burn candles in a well-ventilated room, but avoid drafts, vents or air currents.** This will help prevent rapid or uneven burning, sooting, and excessive dripping.

- **Trim the wick** to ¼ inch each time before burning. Long or crooked wicks can cause uneven burning, dripping or flaring.
- Don't move candles once they are lit
- **Follow the manufacturer's recommendations** on burn time and proper use.



- Do not burn several candles close together as this might cause flaring (mainly with tea-lights).
- Use a snuffer or a spoon to put out candles. It's safer than blowing them out when sparks can fly.

3.3 Halloween

Candles and jack-o-lanterns bring fire hazards and with children dressing up in fancy dress costumes, this provides an opportunity to remind parents/child carers to only buy fancy dress costumes from reputable retailers and always check the label – clothing will always burn if in contact with naked flames, but some much faster than others.

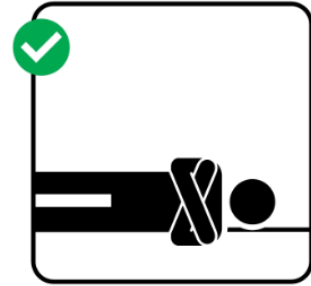
It is also worth reminding parents/child carers to keep these items out of children's reach and to teach them and their children what to do should something happen.



STOP!



DROP!



ROLL!

4. National Resources

Fire Kills national advertising resources

Some of the national advertising materials are available to, which can support the promotion of smoke alarm testing messaging. The non-licensed assets (videos not including people) can be used throughout the year to support fire prevention messaging. The assets are available on the [NFCC website](#).



Fire Kills Portal

The Fire Kills Campaign [Portal](#) hosts all the artwork and Fire Kills material and is available to all fire and rescue practitioners.

There is a single login for you to access the Portal (not for public sharing):

- Username: FireSafety45
- Password: FSPartner

Please contact [James Webb](#) if you have any queries.

Fire Kills Campaign

Here you will find all the material for Fire Kills campaign. Check out the "Fire Kills Showcase" to see our pick of the best. Don't forget to check the "Monthly Communications Briefing" area regularly for all the new stuff.



Archive



Awareness Days and Weeks



Brand



Covid-19 Fire Prevention Resources



Fillers



Fireworks assets



Kids



Leaflets



Monthly assets



Photos & Icons



Posters



Social



Translated resources

StayWise

The online emergency services educational resources platform, StayWise, has a wide range of lesson plans, interactive games, activities and other resources to promote fire safety – and other safety messages – to children and young people. Many resources link to the other areas of the curriculum, allowing fire safety messages to be relayed as part of maths, English and science lessons, for example. Visit and promote the site – www.staywise.co.uk.



StyWise
SAVING LIVES THROUGH EDUCATION



Online home fire safety check tool

The NFCC tool has been developed to complement the in-person home fire safety visits. It allows for a self-assessment of a household's fire safety, taking into account the individual circumstances and providing person-centred, tailored advice. The tool has also proven very useful in identifying those people more vulnerable to fire and in securing referrals for in-person visits. The tool is now referred to on Fire Kills literature and the FireEngland.uk website.

For more information on how your fire and rescue service can get more from the tool, please get in touch with [James Webb](#).



Welcome to the online home fire safety check

This easy-to-follow home fire safety check has been developed through a partnership between the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC), Fire Kills and Safelincs. It will take you through your home one room at a time and the simple questions will help you spot fire risks as you go around your home.

The tool will offer tips and advice on the steps you can take to reduce those risks. At the end, you will receive a personalised fire safety action plan to help keep you and your household safe from fire.

Top tip




Fit smoke alarms

Top tip



Plan your escape route

Top tip



Get out, stay out and call 999

5. Draft social media posts

Smoke alarms

- *Smoke alarms save lives, but only if they work. Test yours now and monthly. #FireKills #SmokeAlarms*

Older People's Day

- *Test smoke alarms for someone who may need help and help to keep them safe #OlderPeoplesDay*

Candle Fire Safety Week

- *Nothing better than the warm glow of candles on wintry nights. As long as they are away from curtains or things that might burn! #CandleFireSafetyWeek #FireKills*
- *Candles look nice and add ambiance to your living room, never leave them unattended; blow out candles when you head to bed. #CandleFireSafetyWeek #FireKills*
- *Berry, vanilla or winter spice? What's your fave? Whatever the scent, never leave a lit candle unattended. #CandleFireSafetyWeek #FireKills*

6. Template Press Notices

Smoke alarm testing

FIRE KILLS CAMPAIGN URGES US ALL TO TEST THE SMOKE ALARMS IN OUR HOMES NOW AND REGULARLY



[Local] Fire and Rescue Service, as part of the Fire Kills Campaign, is urging people to test their smoke alarms as fire statistics show that where smoke alarms were present, they failed to operate in 20 per cent of fires in 2021/22.

[Insert name of spokesperson] of **[insert name of Fire and Rescue Service]** said: “You’re around nine times more likely to die in a fire if you don’t have any working smoke alarms. Making sure you have enough in your home and that they are working is vital to ensure you allow them to do their job if you need them.”

There were 203 fire-related deaths in the home in the year ending March 2023. The Fire Kills campaign hopes that by encouraging everyone to test their smoke alarms more deaths could be prevented.

[Local spokesperson] added, “I’d encourage people in **[area]** to make sure you test your smoke alarms today and get into the habit of testing them regularly as they can save you and your family’s life. In the event of a fire, working smoke alarms will give you the valuable time to get out, stay out and call 999.”

To help keep you and your loved ones safe, **[local FRS spokesperson]** offers these simple steps:

- Test your smoke alarms now or when you get home
- Make sure you fit smoke alarms on every level of your home and test them regularly, even if they’re wired into the mains.
- Whatever happens, never remove the batteries in your smoke alarms unless you are replacing them. Some require new batteries every year.
- Plan and practise an escape route and make sure that everyone in your home knows it.
- In the event of a fire, get out, stay out and call 999.
- Test others smoke alarms who are unable to test their own

[Local] fire and rescue service are supporting the testing of smoke alarms by **[insert details of local activity]**.

- ENDS -

Candle Fire Safety Week

Candle Fire Safety Week: Snuff out the fire risk

As part of the Fire Kills campaign, fire and rescue services across the country are asking people to take care this Candle Fire Safety Week (23-29 October) and snuff out the risk of fire in their homes.



With winter fast approaching, a few candles scattered round the room can lend a warm glow to an evening in or add some festive cheer to the season's celebrations such as Guy Fawkes' night and Christmas. But with candle fires resulting in around 300 casualties each year, **[insert name of FRS]** are asking people to take extra care with candles this winter – around a third of all fires started by candles attended by fire and rescue services result in a death or injury.

The most important step you can take to keep yourself and your loved ones safe is to ensure your home has working smoke alarms. To prevent candle fires from starting in your home, you should make sure your candles are kept away from flammable materials like curtains and ensure candles are put out when you leave the room, even for a moment.

[Insert name of FRS spokesperson] said:

“Candles are a typical sight in many homes, scenting our rooms and giving an atmospheric glow to cold winter nights. But it's important to remember that a candle is not just a decorative feature. Left unattended, an open flame scenting your home could leave a trail of devastation.

“Place your lit candles with extra care, away from curtains, pets and children and always remember to put them out when you leave the room, even for a moment.”

“Even with these precautions it's vital to be prepared should the worst happen. Working smoke alarms can give you the vital time you need to get out, stay out and call 999. Keep yourself and your loved ones safe by testing your alarm regularly and by practicing your escape routes.”

To help you enjoy your candles safely, the Fire Kills campaign has offered some tips for this Candle Fire Safety Week:

- **Never leave lit candles unattended.** Put burning candles out when you leave the room, and make sure they're out completely at night.
- **Place your candles carefully.** Make sure they are on a stable surface, out of the reach of pets and children, and keep them away from flammable objects like curtains, furniture, bedding and books.
- **Don't move candles once they are lit**
- **Do not burn several candles close together** as this might cause the flame to flare
- **Burn candles in a well-ventilated room, out of drafts, vents or air currents.** This will help prevent rapid or uneven burning, soot, and dripping.

- **Always put scented candles in a heat resistant holder.** These candles are designed to liquefy when heated to maximise fragrance.
- **Fit smoke alarms and test them now and monthly.** A working smoke alarm can buy you valuable time to get out, stay out and call 999.
- Make sure that everyone in your home knows what to do if a fire should occur– **practise your escape route.**

- ENDS -