



R B F & R S

news release

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TACKLE THE BURNING ISSUE THIS GRANDPARENTS' DAY

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) is asking older people, and those who support them, to consider how well protected they are from fire this Grandparents' Day (5 October).

Recent statistics show that a third of all fatalities caused by accidental house fires involve people over the age of 75. Aside from the risk of death or injury, fire can also cause devastating damage to your home and the loss of valuables, which can be a traumatic and costly burden.

Help to reduce your risk of fire this Grandparents' Day by following these simple tips:

1. **Fit and maintain smoke alarms.** You should have one on each level of your home.
2. **Test smoke alarms weekly.** Working smoke alarms can give you valuable time to escape if a fire breaks out.
3. **Don't remove the batteries.** If your smoke alarm goes off accidentally while you are cooking, move the alarm further away from the kitchen or change it for one with a silencer button.
4. **Stay safe in the kitchen.** This is where most house fires start, so never leave cooking unattended.
5. **Never overload plug sockets.** One plug per socket is the rule.
6. **Get 'key clever'.** Keep your door and window keys in a safe place so you can quickly find them in the event of a fire.
7. **Plan your escape route.** Make sure you and your family know the quickest way out in an emergency. Consider an alternative route in case your usual one is blocked.

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8. **Use candles safely.** Keep candles in secure holders, on a surface that doesn't burn, and

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away from any materials that may catch fire, such as curtains. Never leave them to burn unattended.

9. **Take care with electric blankets.** Make sure they are turned off and stored flat or rolled up (not folded) when not in use. Never use them with a hot water bottle. Check regularly for wear and tear.
10. **In the event of a fire - Get Out, Stay Out and Call 999.** Don't investigate or try to tackle the fire yourself.

RBFRS can provide a **FREE** Home Fire Safety Check, give advice on making an escape plan and fit free smoke alarms where necessary. To book yours, call 0800 587 6679 or e-mail [**community.safety@rbfrs.co.uk**](mailto:community.safety@rbfrs.co.uk).

Jane Weller, Community Safety Officer, said: "Sadly, it's a fact that you are at an increased risk from fire if you are over 75. Having working smoke alarms, understanding how to reduce the risk of fire in the home, and knowing what to do in an emergency can save lives. This Grandparents' Day, protect yourself or a loved one by booking a free Home Fire Safety Check."

ENDS.

Notes to Editors:

- Grandparents' Day 2008 takes place on Sunday 5 October. It was brought to the UK by Age Concern in 1990. The national event celebrates the important role grandparents play in society and highlights the special relationship they have with their grandchildren.
- Please visit the Age Concern website for further information: [**www.ageconcern.co.uk**](http://www.ageconcern.co.uk).