



R B F & R S

news release

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PUT IT OUT, RIGHT OUT THIS NO SMOKING DAY

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) is supporting national No Smoking Day (Wednesday 11 March) by giving smokers another reason to think about quitting. Most people are aware of the health risks associated with smoking but did you know that more people die in fires caused by smoking materials than any other type of accidental house fire?

The most common causes of smoking related fires are falling asleep while smoking; leaving a burning cigarette unattended; and accidentally dropping a cigarette or hot ash. As many smoking-related fires occur between 10pm and 3am, RBFRS is urging smokers to be extra careful when smoking at home, especially at night.

Giving up is obviously the best way to reduce the risk of a smoking related fire. However, if you're not ready to kick the habit, make sure you follow this advice to prevent a fire:

- **Put it out, right out!** Make sure your cigarette is properly extinguished.
- **Take extra care when you're tired, have been drinking or taking medication.** It's very easy to fall asleep while your cigarette is still burning.
- **Never smoke in bed.** If you need to lie down, don't light up – you could fall asleep and never wake up.
- **Never leave lit cigarettes, cigars or pipes unattended.** They can easily overbalance as they burn down.
- **Use a proper, heavy ashtray.** Make sure it can't tip over and is made of a material that won't burn.
- **Tap your ash into an ashtray, never a rubbish bin.** Don't let the ash and cigarette ends build up in the ashtray.

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Paul Jacques, Community Safety Manager, said: "Fires caused by smoking materials can have devastating consequences. The economic cost of a house fire is huge and you can't put a value on the lives of loved ones.

"However, by giving up smoking or at the very least by taking extra care to extinguish smoking materials properly, you can reduce your risk of fire in the home. You can also protect yourself and your family by fitting smoke alarms on every level of your home and test the batteries weekly. "

RBFRS offers free Home Fire Safety Checks to everyone in Berkshire, although priority will be given to households or individuals identified by us to be at a greater risk of accidental fire in the home, e.g. the elderly and those suffering from long term illness.

The Home Fire Safety Check provides advice on how to make an escape plan and the installation of free smoke alarms where necessary. To book yours, call freephone **0800 587 6679** or email community.safety@rbfrs.co.uk, quoting reference number 198.

Members of RBFRS' Community Safety team will be working in partnership with Berkshire East Primary Care Trust (PCT) on No Smoking Day, Wednesday 11 March. They will be in Princess Square, Bracknell and at Tesco in Slough from 10am-12pm.

The PCT will be giving people advice and information on how to give up smoking, while RBFRS will be taking bookings for free Home Fire Safety Checks and providing advice on reducing the risk of fire in the home.

ENDS.