



R B F & R S

news release

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SWEEP YOUR WAY TO SAFETY

With summer drawing to an end, Chimney Fire Safety Week (21-27 September) provides a timely reminder to make sure your chimney is ready for the winter months ahead. Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) is urging householders to ensure their chimney is safe and to have their chimney swept by a registered chimney sweep.

Open fires warm up a home and create a relaxing ambience but latest statistics show that there are approximately 6,000 chimney fires each year in England¹. The good news is that most chimney fires can be prevented by following these simple tips:

- Always use a fire guide to protect against flying sparks from hot embers
- Make sure embers are properly put out before you go to bed
- Keep chimneys and flues clean and well maintained

The National Association of Chimney Sweeps advises that chimneys are cleaned regularly as follows:

Smokeless coals	At least once a year
Wood	Up to four times a year
Bituminous coal	Twice a year
Oil	Once a year
Gas	Once a year

Paul Jacques, Group Manager for Community Safety at RBFRS, said: "As the weather becomes colder, many people look forward to having open fires again. However, it's important to make sure that your chimney is swept regularly to help keep you and your family safe from an accidental fire in the home.

"It is also vital to make sure you have working smoke alarms. Fitting smoke alarms to every level of your home and testing the batteries weekly could save your life in the event of a fire."

ENDS.

¹ Department of Communities and Local Government (CLG)