



# R B F & R S

## news release

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### **FIREFIGHTERS WARN SMOKERS TO TAKE EXTRA CARE AFTER HOUSE FIRES**

Firefighters are warning Bracknell residents to take extra care when smoking at home after three smoking-related fires took place in the Bracknell Forest area in December.

The first incident was in Cunworth Court on 3 December, where an ambulance had to be called for a man suffering from smoke inhalation. The second took place in London Road on 12 December, and the third was in Bradfields, Harmans Water on 30 December, at which fire crews had to administer oxygen to a male casualty. All three incidents were caused by smoking materials and on each occasion the fire started in the living room of the property.

The most common causes of smoking-related fires are:

- Falling asleep while smoking
- Leaving a burning cigarette unattended
- Accidentally dropping a cigarette or hot ash

Tragically, fires started by cigarettes are often fatal – usually because the smoker is asleep when the fire takes hold.

Giving up is obviously the best way to prevent a smoking-related fire in the home but if you haven't made quitting your New Year's resolution, follow these simple tips to reduce your risk:

- **Put it out, right out!** Make sure your cigarette is properly extinguished
- Never smoke in bed
- Always use a proper ashtray and make sure it can't be knocked over
- Never leave lit cigarettes unattended
- Take extra care when you're tired, having been drinking or taking medication
- Keep matches and lighters out of children's reach

You can also give yourself and your family precious extra time to escape in the event of a fire by installing smoke alarms. Fit one on every level of your home and test the batteries every week.

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Iain Harrison, Station Manager at Bracknell Fire Station, said: "Fires caused by smoking

materials can have devastating consequences but the good news is that they can be easily prevented. Protect yourself and your family from fire by taking extra care to ensure that cigarettes are put out properly and never leave them unattended.”

Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) supports Berkshire East Primary Care Trust’s Smoke Free Homes project. The project encourages parents to make their homes and cars smoke-free zones to protect the health of their children.

Dawn Estabrook, Manager of East Berkshire Stop Smoking Service (Berkshire East Community Health Services), said: “People may not realise that cigarettes can cost them their homes as well as their health. This is why we are working in partnership with RBFRS on the Smoke Free Homes project to encourage people to keep their homes smoke-free.

“We also provide advice and support for people who want to quit smoking - people who quit with the NHS are four times likely to quit successfully. For free stop smoking support, call **0845 602 4218.**”

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\*\*](mailto:community.safety@rbfrs.co.uk)

**ENDS.**