



Home Office



**NFCC**  
National Fire  
Chiefs Council

# PROTECT YOUR HOME WITH SMOKE ALARMS



**National Fire Safety Campaign  
August Briefing Pack –  
Smoke Alarm Purchasing**

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## 1. Summary

### ***More smoke alarms required***

This briefing pack provides you with information about national fire safety activity for August 2018 which will focus on 'Smoke Alarm Purchasing'.

### ***Do you have enough smoke alarms?***

Smoke alarms save lives – having them and regularly testing them is the key message. We know that encouraging people to test their smoke alarms also acts as a reminder for people to buy new – or more – smoke alarms.

### ***Smoke alarm failures***

We all know the benefits of working smoke alarms and it seems that the public are aware of their importance too – the latest English Housing Survey reports that 95 per cent of homes now have at least one working smoke alarm.

However, fire statistics indicate that **the biggest reason for both battery-operated and mains-wired smoke alarms failing to activate in a fire was that the smoke did not reach the detector.** This raises three potential avenues for encouraging smoke alarm ownership throughout August:

- Targeting the five per cent who don't own a working smoke alarm.
- Targeting those who do to ensure they have enough around their home – at least one on every level and near rooms with particular risks – **one is not enough!**
- Targeting carers and those living near less able family members to check that these homes have enough working smoke alarms in the right places.

### ***How old are your alarms?***

It is widely accepted in the fire sector that smoke alarms have a lifetime of 10 years. The need to replace alarms is not widely known and many people will be reluctant to replace an alarm, especially if they believe it still works. This month's theme provides an opportunity to inform people of the need to replace alarms every 10 years.

### ***Off to university?***

With prospective first-year students getting ready to live independently away from home for the first time, the summer holidays provide a chance to remind the 2018 student intake of the need to ensure they have appropriate smoke detection coverage in their new accommodation. You could try contacting your local National Union of Students (NUS) representative at a college/university near you and ask them to help promote messages to students via the student union.

### ***June's outdoor fire safety briefing pack***

As the summer holidays continue and the sun shines, you will likely wish to again promote outdoor fire safety messages (see June's briefing pack).



**Fit smoke alarms**

## **Barbecues**

Incidents are being reported of barbecues being used in enclosed spaces resulting in CO poisoning. You may wish to specifically promote barbecue safety messages as they fit nicely within both cooking and summer fire safety.

### **BBQ safety**

**BBQs produce carbon monoxide which is a highly poisonous substance. Without an adequate supply of fresh air it can kill quickly with no warning. Stay safe and follow these simple tips for BBQ safety.**



- ✓ Never take a smouldering or lit BBQ (charcoal or gas) into a tent, caravan or cabin. Even if you have finished cooking your BBQ will still give off fumes for some hours after use.
- ✓ Never use a BBQ inside to keep you warm.
- ✓ Never leave a lit BBQ unattended or while sleeping.
- ✓ Only use appliances in accordance with the operating instructions.
- ✓ Place your cooking area well away from your tent. Always ensure there is an adequate supply of fresh air where the BBQ is being used.
- ✓ Remember the six main signs and symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning – headaches, dizziness, breathlessness, nausea, collapse and loss of consciousness. If concerned, seek medical advice.

**For more information visit [GasSafeRegister.co.uk/BBQ](http://GasSafeRegister.co.uk/BBQ) or call 0800 408 5500**



## 2. Messages

### **Smoke alarms**

- Install smoke alarms on every level of your home and test them monthly.
- Even mains-wired and 10 year battery alarms should be tested monthly.
- Consider installing a 10 year battery alarm. They are slightly more expensive, but you save on the cost of replacing batteries.
- Don't put alarms in or near kitchens or bathrooms where smoke or steam can set them off by accident.
- The ideal position is on the ceiling, in the middle of a room, and on the hallway and landing, so you can hear the alarm throughout your home. But consider installing them in other rooms where there may be fire hazards, particularly in bedrooms.
- Make testing your smoke alarms part of your regular household routine.
- Test them by pressing the buttons until the alarm sounds. If an alarm doesn't sound, you may need to replace the battery.
- If your smoke alarm starts to beep on a regular basis, you need to replace the battery immediately.
- Smoke alarms have expiry dates and must be replaced every ten years, even if they still function.



### **Barbecues**

- Never take a smouldering or lit BBQ (charcoal or gas) into a tent, caravan or cabin. Even if you have finished cooking, your BBQ should remain outside as it will still give off fumes for some hours after use.
- Never use a BBQ inside to keep you warm. BBQs in confined spaces can put you at risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Stay safe whilst camping. Never leave a lit BBQ unattended or while sleeping.
- Using a BBQ or portable heater this summer? Only use appliances in accordance with the operating instructions. Never use indoors.



**Never take a smouldering or lit BBQ inside**

Never take a BBQ into a tent, caravan or cabin. BBQs (charcoal and gas) produce carbon monoxide which is a highly poisonous substance. You can't see it, taste it or smell it and without an adequate supply of fresh air it can kill quickly with no warning.

GasSafeRegister.co.uk/BBQ  
0800 400 9900

**gas safe**  
REGISTER

- Remember the signs and symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning – headaches, dizziness, breathlessness, nausea, collapse and loss of consciousness. If concerned seek medical advice.

### **3. Draft Social Media Posts**

National fire safety draft tweets and hashtags which you may wish to use are below:

#### ***Smoke alarms – at least one on every level***

*Working smoke alarms save lives, but only if they're in the right place. One on every level is an absolute minimum. #SmokeAlarms*

*5% don't own a smoke alarm. Are you one of them? Get them. Install them. Test them. They could save your life and those of your family. #SmokeAlarms*

*Take responsibility for your household's safety – fit working smoke alarms on every level of your home. #SmokeAlarms*

*Will you hear your smoke alarm beep if you're asleep? Only if it's nearby! Have at least 1 on every level of your home and where you can hear them throughout your home. #SmokeAlarms*

*Got smoke alarm downstairs, but fire starts upstairs... make sure you have at least one of every level of your home. #SmokeAlarms*

*Is your smoke alarm getting old and tired? Smoke alarms need replacing every 10 years; how old are yours? #SmokeAlarms #FireSafety*

*Like worn toothbrushes, thinning carpets and ageing boilers, older smoke alarms need replacing. If yours are 10 years old, their time is up! #SmokeAlarms*

*A decade is a long-time for a smoke alarm. Give yours the retirement it deserves and buy a new one. #SmokeAlarms #FireSafety*

*Press to test your smoke alarms, it could just save you and your loved ones' lives. #PressToTest. #SmokeAlarms*

*#SmokeAlarms give you a warning, but you need to know what to do – have escape plan #FireSafety #SmokeAlarms*

*When setting up your home's fire escape plan, make sure smoke alarms are a part of it. They save lives every single day! #SmokeAlarms #FireSafety*

#### ***Barbecues***

The Gas Safe Register has provided social media updates for BBQ and CO messaging, should you wish to use them:

*Facebook posts:*

- Never take a smouldering or lit BBQ (charcoal or gas) into a tent, caravan or cabin. Even if you have finished cooking, your BBQ should remain outside as it will still give off fumes for some hours after use.

- Never use a BBQ inside to keep you warm. BBQs in confined spaces can put you at risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Stay safe whilst camping. Never leave a lit BBQ unattended or while sleeping.
- Using a BBQ or portable heater this summer? Only use appliances in accordance with the operating instructions. Never use indoors.
- Remember the signs and symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning – headaches, dizziness, breathlessness, nausea, collapse and loss of consciousness. If concerned seek medical advice.

*Twitter updates:*

- Never use a BBQ inside to keep you warm. BBQs in confined spaces can put you at risk of carbon monoxide poisoning. <http://bit.ly/Mq0CZi>.
- Stay safe whilst camping. Never leave a lit BBQ unattended or while sleeping. <http://bit.ly/Mq0CZi>
- Using a BBQ or portable heater this summer? Understand the dangers of using them incorrectly. <http://bit.ly/Mq0CZi>
- “Is a smouldering BBQ in a tent as dangerous as a lit one?” Yes, Find out why. <http://bit.ly/Mq0CZi>
- Regardless of the weather you shouldn’t use a BBQ inside your tent or caravan. Read our important tips to stay safe <http://bit.ly/Mq0CZi>



## 5. National Fire Safety Campaign Portal

The National [Fire Safety Campaign Portal](#) hosts all of the national fire safety campaign artwork and material and is available to all fire and rescue practitioners.

There is a single login for you to access the Portal:

Please contact Laura Udeh – [laura.udeh@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:laura.udeh@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk) if you have any queries.

### National Fire Safety Campaign

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



2018 National advertising campaign



Archive



Brand



Fillers



Kids



Leaflets



Monthly Campaigns



Partner Pack 2016



Photos & Icons



Posters



Social

## 6. Template Press Release – Purchasing

## How many smoke alarms do you have?

Fire statistics reveal that one smoke alarm may not be enough to provide you with the best chance of escaping a fire in the home.

Most people know that working smoke alarms save lives. They provide the vital early warning that allows for a safe escape and a tragedy avoided. But, despite the majority of homes (95 per cent) having at least one smoke alarm, smoke alarms only alerted householders to just under half of fires in the home in England. The most common reason a smoke alarm failed to activate was because the fire was outside its range.

For this reason, the national fire safety campaign and **[local fire and rescue service]** are encouraging people in **[area]** to think about the smoke alarms in their home.

*“We all must make sure that we have enough smoke alarms in our homes and that they are in the right places,”* said **[spokesperson]** from **[local fire and rescue service]**. *“If your whole home isn’t covered, you could be leaving it to chance and, in a fire, you might not get the early warning that you need”.*

*“The vast majority of us now have at least one working smoke alarm in our home, but early detection and warning is vital to reduce the devastation a fire can cause. That’s why it’s so important that you have enough smoke alarms and that they are in the right places. That will give them the best chance of alerting you and your loved ones to a fire.”*

**[Insert case study where applicable]**

**[Spokesperson]** continued; *“You should make sure you have at least one smoke alarm on every level of your home, preferably in hallways and landings. And placing smoke detectors near to sleeping areas and in rooms where there are electrical appliances could give you the extra warning you need.*

*“It’s also important to remember that smoke alarms don’t last forever. The power might work, but the detection mechanism deteriorates with time. So whether they are battery operated or wired to the mains, to work at their best they should be replaced every ten years.”*

**[Local fire and rescue service]** offered these five smoke alarm top tips:

- Install at least one smoke alarm on every level of your home.
- The ideal position is on the ceiling, in the middle of a room or on a hallway or landing.
- Consider fitting additional alarms in other rooms where there are electrical appliances and near sleeping areas
- Don’t put alarms in or near kitchens and bathrooms where smoke or steam can set them off by accident.
- Replace your smoke alarms every ten years.

**[Local fire and rescue service]** are also urging carers and people who keep a close eye on less able relatives to check that these homes have enough smoke alarms in the right places too.

*“And finally,” added **[spokesperson]**, “don’t forget to test your smoke alarms every month. They can only do their job if they’re in good working order.”*

**- ENDS -**