

# Fire safety



Many householders don't realise that failure to maintain their electrical wiring in good condition could lead to fire.

Cables, switches, socket outlets and other equipment deteriorate with use, and they all need to be checked and necessary replacements or repairs made in good time.

Checklist to minimise the risk of electrical fire:

- Inspect socket outlets for burn marks, arcing (buzzing) and excess heat
- Check flexible cables for damaged, loose and exposed wiring
- Test residual current devices (RCDs). RCDs switch off the electricity supply when a fault is detected. An RCD should be used when plugging in any outdoor equipment. Read the instruction label, and test by pressing the 'T' or 'Test Button'.
- Don't obstruct your consumer unit, you need quick and easy access in an emergency
- Don't leave electrical appliances on unnecessarily - switch them off before going out or going to bed - it'll save you money too!
- Don't overload adaptors by plugging in too many appliances, it's a serious fire hazard
- For the protection of you and your family, make sure you have at least one smoke alarm in your home and test it and change the battery regularly
- Get your electrical system checked by a competent person at least once every 10 years

Electricity is a major contributor to a home's comfort factor, yet it is easy to forget that electricity is a potentially lethal force. Statistics show that 20% of all domestic fires each year are caused by an electrical-related incident/hazard - a large proportion of these could be avoided if householders gave priority to having their electrical installations checked.

For more information on fire safety, refer to the DCLG's website at [www.firekills.gov.uk](http://www.firekills.gov.uk)