

## Chimney Fires are Dangerous

- The first indication of a chimney fire is usually a roaring sound that increases in noise as the fire gets bigger.
- Black smoke, sparks or even flames can exit the top of the chimney.
- Burning soot may fall down the chimney and set fire to carpets and furniture.
- Sparks from the chimney may set fire to surrounding property.
- Heat from the fire in the chimney may cause structural damage to your house, or the adjoining property.
- Such damage may not be discovered at once and may cause another more serious fire at a later date.

A chimney fire is not just a nuisance, it can cause serious damage to your property, it may even destroy your home.

**If Your Chimney Is On Fire:-  
Dial 999 (there is no charge)  
Ask For the Fire & Rescue Service**

If you notice faults in your chimney, have them repaired by your builder, for tenants, notify your landlord.

Chimney sweeps are available via local newspapers and in the yellow pages.

For further home fire safety advice, including a **Free Home Fire Safety Check**, 08000 12 13 12 or visit [www.hifb.org](http://www.hifb.org)



Fit smoke Alarms in your home, in the hallway on each floor level.

- Test your Smoke Alarms every week.
- Don't remove batteries from alarms for any reason – always have a spare battery handy.
- Preferably fit Smoke Alarms with 10 year batteries.
- Replace alarms after 10 years, or if alarm fails its weekly test.



## Chimney Sweeping

### Clean Chimneys are Safer Chimneys.

Chimney sweeping is important, it could save your life. It reduces the risk of a chimney fire and also reduces the risk of Carbon Monoxide poisoning, which can be caused by blockages in heating appliance flue ways and chimneys.

- Chimneys using smokeless fuel should be swept at least once a year.
- Chimneys using coal should be swept at least once every six months.
- Chimneys using wood should be swept at least once every three months, when in use.
- Chimneys using oil should be swept once a year.

### Preventing Chimney Fires

- Do not light fires using flammable liquids such as petrol or paraffin.
- Do not burn paper or rubbish on fires in the grate.
- Do not overload the fire with fuel.
- Use a spark-guard when the fire is unattended to prevent embers setting fire to furnishings or carpets.
- Go into the loft occasionally to check the chimney when the fire is alight. Check for smoke from cracks, defective brickwork or mortar joints.

## Carbon Monoxide (CO) Poisoning

Fuel burning appliances need air and ventilation to work safely – otherwise they may kill people. Heating and cooking appliances fuelled by coal, smokeless fuels, wood, oil and gas can cause CO poisoning if they are poorly installed, incorrectly used or if they are not properly and regularly maintained.

When fuel does not burn properly, it produces CO gas.

CO poisoning kills people. It can also damage your health permanently. The early symptoms of CO poisoning are:

- Tiredness • Drowsiness
- Dizziness • Chest Pains and;
- Nausea.

Make sure you are not at risk from CO poisoning by:

- Having appliances installed and properly checked by a competent engineer.
- Getting your chimney or flue inspected and checked.
- Not overloading a fire and only burning the fuel it is designed for.
- Fitting a Carbon Monoxide detector.

## Ventilation

### Air is vital.

Heating appliances must be able to breathe in order to function efficiently, whatever the type of fuel they burn. To breathe they need a constant and sufficient flow of air, so make sure the room is not completely airtight. If your home has draught-proofing or double-glazing fitted, you may need vents or air bricks in an exterior wall of the room. If you already have the vents or air bricks, make sure they are not blocked or covered.

- Blocked chimneys cause toxic fumes to come back into the room – get them swept.
- Always have the chimney swept if you decide to re-use the fireplace.
- Make sure new water heaters in a bathroom are fitted to a balanced flue.
- Never block the outside grill of the flue.
- Never block air bricks or vents.
- If you fit an extractor fan or hood, make sure it does not suck toxic fumes back down flues or chimneys.
- When you fit double-glazing or draught-proofing, make sure there is still enough air for the heaters in the room.

Have your gas or oil-fired boiler serviced and flue checked once a year.