



## GET SMART!

Information that could save your life.

## GET EQUIPPED!

Investing in your own safety.

## GET OUT!

Make a plan. Be prepared.

This is one of a series of leaflets in the 'Get Smart! Get Equipped! Get Out!' fire safety range available from your local Fire and Rescue Service. Other leaflets in the series provide advice on fire safety equipment, fire safety for parents and children, and extra information for those with eyesight problems or problems getting around.

Translations and alternative formats are also available.

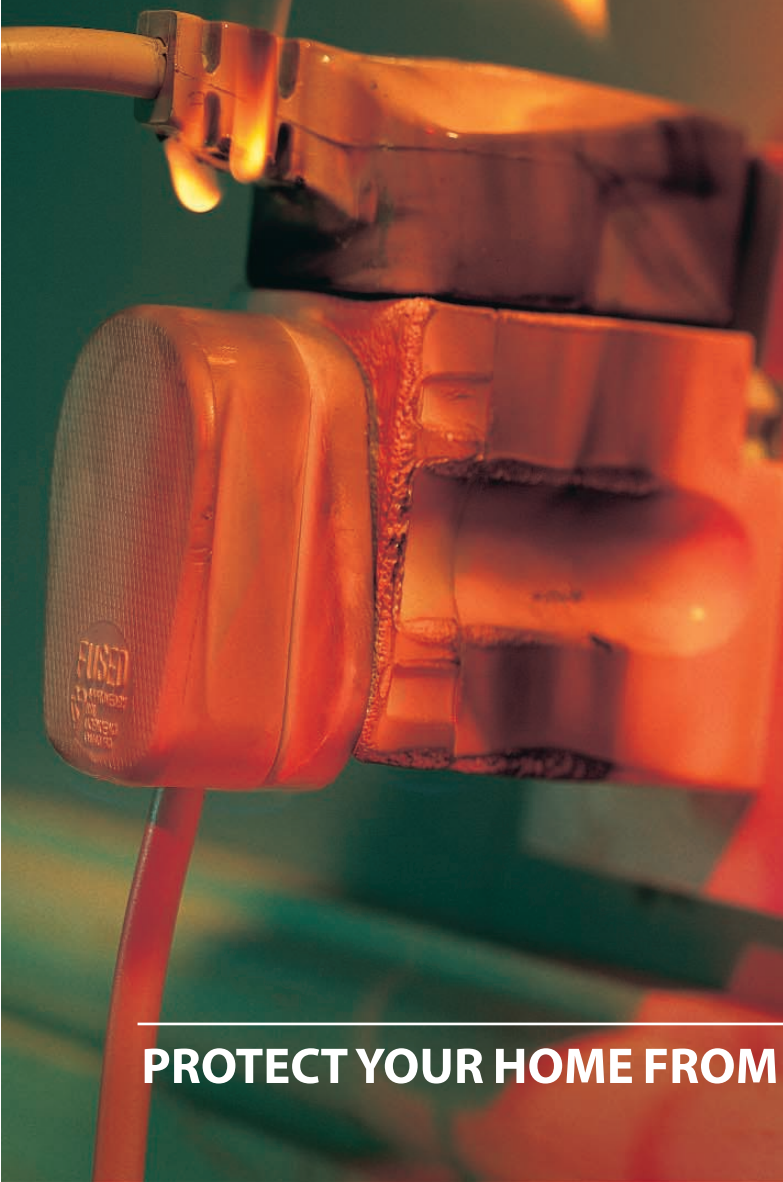
Published by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.  
©Crown copyright 2003. Printed in the UK, February 2004,  
on material containing 75% post-consumer waste  
and 25% ECF pulp (03DOC01123)  
Product code: Fire Electrical 04



**For further information visit our website at: [www.firekills.gov.uk](http://www.firekills.gov.uk)**

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# Electrical safety



**FIRE  
KILLS**

**YOU CAN  
PREVENT IT**

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**PROTECT YOUR HOME FROM FIRE**

# Fire safety – electrical safety

Don't underestimate the fire risk from electricity. Just because there's no flame doesn't mean there's no risk. Electric wires don't even need to touch anything for a spark to jump and a fire to start.

## Real life – a simple mistake



Jo Clarke was busy cooking and didn't notice when the lead from the kettle got pushed onto a hot ring.

When flames suddenly shot up from the plug in the wall, Jo panicked.

She shouted for the children, got them out of the house and called 999 on her mobile.

By the time the fire brigade arrived one wall of the kitchen was badly damaged, but at least no one was hurt.

Treat electricity with care. Keep cables free from dangers.

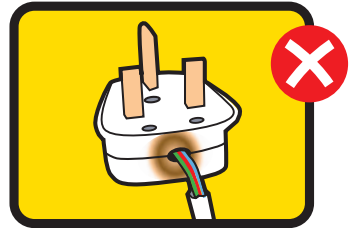


***Turn off and unplug electrical appliances when they are not being used, unless they are designed to be left on (for example, freezers and video recorders).***

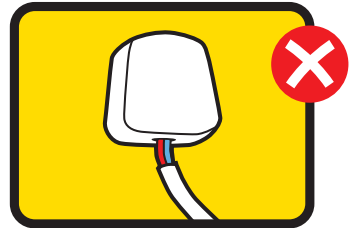
# WHAT TO CHECK FOR – DANGER SIGNS

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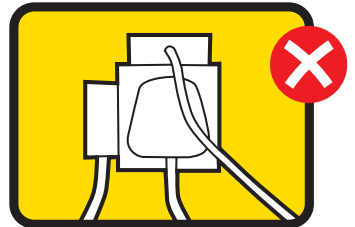
- Watch out for hot plugs and sockets, fuses that blow for no reason, flickering lights, and scorch marks on sockets or plugs.



- Check electrical leads and plugs for wear and tear and faulty wiring. Frayed leads or exposed internal wires are fire risks.



- Don't overload sockets – use one plug in each socket.



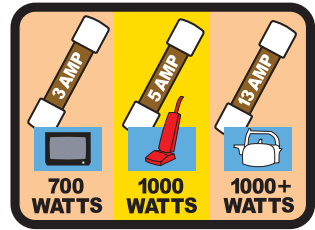
This is a 'block-type' adaptor

- Keep electrical leads, plugs and appliances away from water.
- Keep electrical appliances clean and in good working order, and have them serviced regularly. This is especially important for washing machines and tumble dryers that may be left on overnight.
- Never buy an electrical appliance without knowing it is safe to use. New appliances should have the British or European safety mark on it. If the appliance is second-hand, always have it checked by a qualified electrician before you use it.

# PLUGS AND CABLES – THE RULES

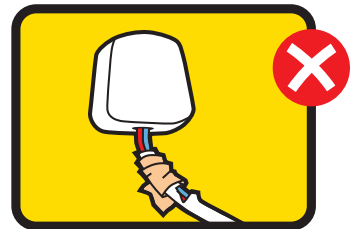
## Prevent overheating – use the right fuse

- **Appliances that use up to 700 watts** (for example, TVs, table lamps, radios, videos, DVD players and electric clocks) need a 3-amp fuse.
- **Appliances that use 700 to 1000 watts** (for example, vacuum cleaners, small electrical tools, blenders and food processors) need a 5-amp fuse.
- **Appliances that use more than 1000 watts** (for example, kettles, computers, toasters, washing machines and hairdryers) need a 13-amp fuse.



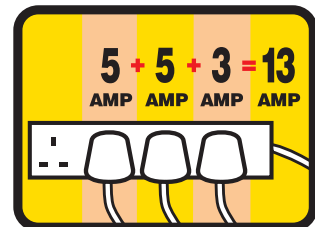
Always check the wattage of the appliance before you fit a new fuse. If you are not sure, ask a qualified electrician.

- Throw away and replace damaged cables. Never use tape to mend or join cables.
- Never run cables under mats or carpets where you cannot see wear and tear.



## Don't overload sockets

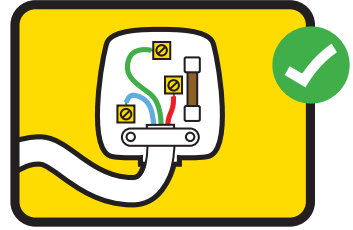
- Use a 'bar-type' fused adaptor on a lead, rather than a 'block-type' adaptor.
- Don't allow the total amps of all plugs in the adaptor to add up to more than 13 amps (or 3000 watts of power).
- Don't plug adaptors into adaptors – use one adaptor in each socket.



This is a 'bar-type' adaptor

## Wire plugs carefully

- Keep the outer covering of the power lead securely inside the plug. Make sure the internal wires are firmly in place and that the right colour wire is in the right place!



Never cut sealed plugs off to use them again.



***Don't take chances with electricity.***

*If you have any concerns, consult a qualified electrician.*

## FIT A SMOKE ALARM

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- The best way for you to protect yourself and your home is to fit a smoke alarm. They cost from as little as £5 and you can get them from supermarkets and high-street stores.
- Make sure you test the smoke alarm's battery every week. If you need help or advice on which is the most suitable smoke alarm for you or where to fit it, contact your local Fire and Rescue Service (Fire Station). They will be happy to give you advice.

# ELECTRIC BLANKETS

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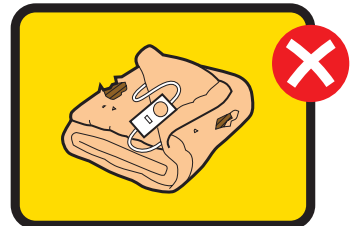
## Does your electric blanket need replacing?

- Check the blanket and its lead for the following signs of wear and tear.
  - Fraying fabric
  - Scorch marks
  - Exposed elements
  - Creasing or folding
  - Soiling
  - Damp patches
  - Damaged or missing tapes
  - Worn lead
  - Loose connections
- Get your blanket tested by an expert every three years. For details of who can test your blanket, ask the shop where you bought it or contact your council's Trading Standards Department.
- Replace electric blankets every 10 years. Never buy second-hand blankets and look out for the British or European safety mark.



## Use your electric blanket safely

- Always follow the instructions.
- Leave a blanket switched on all night only if it has thermostatic controls that make it safe to use all night. Otherwise, switch it off and unplug it before you get into bed.
- Don't get an electric blanket wet. If it gets wet, don't use it until it is completely dry. Never switch it on to dry it.
- Store electric blankets flat or rolled – never fold them!

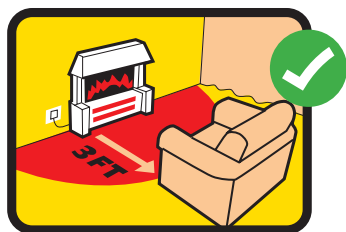


# FIRES AND HEATERS

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## Take care with electric heaters

- Keep them clear of curtains and furniture.
- Don't dry washing on or near heaters, or on fireguards.
- Sit at least one metre (three feet) away.
- Don't cover the air vents of storage heaters, fan heaters and convection heaters.
- Use a fireguard with open fires.



## DEALING WITH ELECTRICAL FIRES

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If an electrical fire is small and hasn't spread, you may be able to tackle it yourself. But it is vital you do things right.

- Pull the plug out or switch the power off at the fuse box. This may stop the fire immediately.
- Smother the fire with a fire blanket.
- Never use water on an electrical fire. Remember, if in doubt – get out and call 999!

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**IF THERE'S A FIRE... Get Out  
Stay Out  
and call  
999**

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### **Don't take risks.**

*There is no such thing as a safe fire. It's better for you to prevent fire than to fight it. Tackling fire is a job best left to professional firefighters.*