Fire Kills Campaign
Monthly Briefing Pack
May 2023 – Escape routes
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1. Introduction

Welcome to the monthly briefing pack for May, which focusses on escape routes. This information pack provides details of national activity that may support local fire and rescue services in their local delivery. It was developed and collated by the Home Office Fire Kills team together with the National Fire Chiefs Council.

Key dates

There are plenty of awareness events taking place in May, with opportunities to promote escape routes, and other fire safety, messaging. Details of the following are included in this pack:

- Deaf Awareness Week (1-7 May)
- NFCC Sprinkler Week (15-21 May)
- Dementia Action Week (15-21 May)
- Mental Health Awareness Week (15-21 May) – note change from calendar date
- Boat Fire Safety Week (29 May – 4 June)

Fire and Rescue Campaign Calendar

The calendar, available on the Fire Kills Portal, provides early indication of the themes and weeks, which will be included within future monthly briefing packs.
Feedback
We hope that these packs support local initiatives and would welcome any feedback on areas for improvement, where we could do more and anything else that you think will be beneficial to fire and rescue services. If you have any feedback or questions on the packs or the campaign more generally, please contact James Webb.

Press templates and social media posts
Draft templates are available within this pack to support local engagement with press and through social media.
2. Escape routes

*Get out, stay out, call 999*

The primary fire safety messages focus on smoke alarms:
- Make sure you have enough in your home (at least one on every level); and
- Test them at least monthly to ensure they are working.

Smoke alarm messages need to be supported by escape route messages and ensuring people know what to do if there is a fire. Having an escape plan can also make the difference between escape and tragedy.

The fire safety campaign has therefore promoted the *Get Out, Stay Out, Call 999* message for several years across several platforms.

*Escape route messages*

Fitting smoke alarms is the first crucial step to protecting yourself and those you love from a fire. But what would you do if one went off?

➢ *Plan a safe escape*
- Plan an escape route and make sure everyone knows how to get out.
- Make sure exits are kept clear.
- The best route is the normal way in and out of your home.
- Plan a second route in case the first one is blocked.
- Take a few minutes to practise your escape plan.
- Review your plan if the layout of your home changes.
- Keep door and window keys where everyone can find them.

➢ *What to do if there is a fire*
- Don’t tackle fires yourself. Leave it to the professionals.
- Keep calm and act quickly. Get everyone out as soon as possible.
- Don’t waste time investigating what’s happened or rescuing valuables.
- If there’s smoke, keep low where the air is clearer.
- Before you open a door, check if it’s warm. If it is, don’t open it — fire is on the other side.
- Call 999 as soon as you’re clear of the building. 999 calls are free.

➢ *What to do if your escape is blocked*
- If you can’t get out, get everyone into one room, ideally with a window and a phone.
- Put bedding around the bottom of the door to block out the smoke, then open the window and call “HELP FIRE”.
- If you’re on the ground or first floor, you may be able to escape through a window.
- Use bedding to cushion your fall and lower yourself down carefully. Don’t jump.
If you can't open the window, break the glass in the bottom corner. Make jagged edges safe with a towel or blanket.

How to escape from a high-rise building

- Blocks of flats are normally built in a way to prevent fires spreading from one flat to another, or to the communal areas. Therefore, if there is a fire in another part of your block it is usually best to stay in your flat. This is known as 'stay put'.
- Ask your landlord what evacuation strategy applies to your block so you know what to do should a fire occur in someone else's flat - it may be that you should stay put, or that you should evacuate the building.
- Leaving the flat when you're not affected by smoke or the fire can place you in greater danger and can hamper the fire and rescue service response.
- The fire and rescue service may trigger a full evacuation, in which case you'll need to get out and stay out.
- If you feel unsafe or your flat is affected by heat or smoke, then get out, stay out and call 999.
- If your escape route is blocked or full of smoke or fire, return to your flat and call 999 so firefighters know where you are and can give you help over the phone.

Additional messages include:

- Make sure you know the escape plan for your building.
- Avoid using lifts if there is a fire.
- It is easy to get confused in smoke, so count how many doors you need to go through to reach the stairs.
- Check there is nothing in the corridors or stairways that could catch fire – like boxes or rubbish.
- Make sure doors to stairways are not locked.
- Make sure everyone knows where the fire alarms are.
- You should still get smoke alarms for your own flat even if there is a warning system in the block.

Children

- It is important that children are never left home alone.
- Research has indicated that some children may not always wake to the sound of a smoke alarm. It is important that escape plans include waking and helping children and vulnerable persons to evacuate
- Families should have a fire escape plan that is rehearsed, so that everyone knows how to escape when fire occurs.
• The fire and rescue service should always be called without delay, no matter how small the fire.

Local examples
If you undertake a successful local initiative, we would love to hear about it and share good examples. Please do get in touch with details.

Escape filler film
In the style of the Fire Kills literature, the ‘Escape – Animation’ video goes through an array of escape messages. As with all fillers, this can be screened in local shopping centres, in schools and universities, doctors’ surgeries and any other out-of-home screen.

You can find the filler video on the Fire Kills Portal in the Fillers section: ‘Escape – Animation’
3. May – Key dates

There are a few awareness weeks taking place in May 2023, which you may wish to get involved in to promote relevant fire safety messages.

3.1 Deaf Awareness Week
Deaf Awareness Week brings together a number of different organisations who work across the broad spectrum of deafness. The theme for Deaf Awareness Week, which runs from 1-7 May, is ‘Access to Communication’, to highlight the challenges faced by the deaf community in accessing communication.

Barriers can include a lack of access to sign language interpreters, limited captioning and subtitling in videos and online content, and a general lack of awareness of the communication needs of deaf individuals. More details are available on the UK Council on Deafness website.

**British Sign Language materials**
The BSL version of the Fire Kills Fire Safety in the Home leaflet, of which DVD hard copies were circulated to fire and rescue services a few years ago, has now been placed on the Fire Kills YouTube channel. For ease of sharing on social media, we have created a shortened link – [http://bit.ly/1YZoCpH](http://bit.ly/1YZoCpH).

3.2 NFCC Sprinkler Week
The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) will be running its National Sprinkler Week campaign from 15-21 May 2023.

The week will highlight the benefits of installing sprinkler systems. NFCC will be working closely with BAFSA to promote sprinkler saves and advice on how fire service may be able to further promote the retrofitting and installation in new buildings. Information will be available on the NFCC website.

3.3 Dementia Action Week
Dementia Action Week is the Alzheimer's Society’s main awareness campaign and will run from 15-21 May 2023. As with last year, the Week will focus on increasing diagnosis rates and address the misconception that memory loss is not just part of getting old but is an illness.

More information on the Week, and the location for resources and how to get involved, can be found on the Alzheimer’s Society website.

3.4 Mental Health Awareness Week
In a change to the date on the Campaign Calendar, the Mental Health Foundation will be running Mental Health Awareness Week from 15 to 21 May, with the theme ‘anxiety’. Although there is no specific fire safety element to the Week, it is a time when the profile of issuing surrounding mental health is raised.
More information on the Week, and the location for resources and how to get involved, can be found on the Mental Health Foundation’s website.

3.5 Boat Fire Safety Week
Once again, we will be working with the Boat Safety Scheme to promote boat fire safety messages across the May half term week – 29 May – 4 June

A bespoke briefing pack for all things Boat Fire Safety Week will be provided separately.
4. Fire Kills Portal

The Fire Kills Campaign Portal hosts all the artwork and Fire Kills material and is available to all fire and rescue practitioners.

There is a single login for you to access the Portal (not for public sharing):

Please contact James Webb if you have any queries.
5. Draft social media posts

**Escape routes**
- Final chance to declutter this spring? Anything in your home that you could trip over? Keep fire escape routes clear in case of an emergency. #EscapePlan

- Do you know what to do if the smoke alarms go off? Plan and practise an escape route! #PlanAnEscape #FireKills

- Do you have an #EscapePlan? If you have a fire, get everyone out and call 999. Remember, don't go back in! #GetOutStayOut #FireKills

- Would you be able to get out of your home with your eyes shut? Smoke from a fire can be very thick and black – plan and practise an escape route!

- Anything in your home that you could trip over? Keep escape routes clear in case of an emergency. #EscapePlan

- If a fire started in your home, what would you do? Get Out, Stay Out, Call 999. #FireKills

- Does your #EscapePlan include a plan B? What if your normal exit was blocked? #GetOutStayOut

**Deaf Awareness Week**
- Did you know there are specialist smoke alarms for those hard of hearing? They’re not all bleeping smoke alarms! #DeafAwarenessWeek #FireKills


- Did you know there are specialist smoke alarms for those hard of hearing? They’re not all bleeping smoke alarms! #DeafAwarenessWeek #FireKills

- Did you know there are smoke alarms for the hard of hearing? Give yourself the best chance of fire survival. #DeafAwarenessWeek #FireKills
6. Template Press Notices

Escape routes

HOW A SPRING CLEAN COULD SAVE YOUR LIFE!

Spring may be over, but there’s still time to squeeze in a final spring clean. A part of the Fire Kills campaign, [Local FRS] is asking people to clear the clutter that may be blocking escape routes and to make sure their family, guests and loved ones know how to get out, stay out, and call 999 in the event of a fire.

Working smoke alarms are regularly the heroes in a fire, giving people the warning they need to get out of their home in a fire. But blocked exits, locked doors or unfamiliar surroundings can shave vital seconds from their escape time.

[Insert details of local activity…]

We all know we need to take time to test our smoke alarms, but this week make time for your home and take some simple steps to help keep your loved ones safe:

1. **Think about how you’d all get out in a fire**, Making and practising an escape plan will help ensure that everyone can get out, stay out and call 999.
2. **Fit at least one smoke alarm on every level of your home** so smoke can reach the alarms quicker giving you more warning time.
3. **Test your smoke alarms at least monthly**. Smoke alarms can save your life, but only if they work.
4. **Clear your escape routes**. Make sure you’re able to escape without tripping over to ensure a speedy exit
5. **Keep your door and window keys in a known and accessible place**. Make sure everyone knows where the door and window keys are kept so they can reach them easily and get out quicker in case of a fire.

Many of us care for others, children and loved ones. If this is you, consider the following:

- How will they get out? Plan an escape route that works for them and think of any difficulties they may have or help they may need getting out. Would they benefit from a torch to light their way or a stair rail?
- Where is the best place to go if the worst happens and they can’t escape? This is especially important if they have trouble moving around or can’t get downstairs on their own.
- Who’s your ‘Escape champ’? Nominate someone in your home (perhaps a child) to be the ‘Escape champ’. Role-playing escape routes regularly and giving children the responsibility to keep escape routes clear makes fire safety more fun and engaging.
{Local fire and rescue spokesperson} said:

“Just two to three breaths of toxic smoke could leave you unconscious, so every second counts when escaping a fire. Having working smoke alarms and knowing the escape plan in an emergency could make all the difference.

“If you have dependants or someone less able to care for, it could take more time to get out, stay out and call 999. Make sure you’re always prepared, your exits are clear and everyone knows what to do if the worst should happen.”

For advice specific to you and your home, complete your own home fire safety check at www.ohfsc.co.uk.

- ENDS -
Deaf Awareness Week

FIRE KILLS CAMPAIGN MAKES ITSELF HEARD THIS DEAF AWARENESS WEEK (1-7 MAY 2023)

[Local fire and rescue service] reaches out to deaf and hard of hearing communities during Deaf Awareness Week (1-7 May) to ensure they have effective smoke alarms.

As part of Deaf Awareness Week, [local fire and rescue service] is reminding [town’s] residents to make sure they fit and test the right smoke alarms for those who suffer from hearing loss in their homes.

A whole range of alarms have been designed specifically for the hard of hearing, with features ranging from strobe lighting and vibrating pads to small wearable radio linked pagers. These specialist alarms can save lives, alerting people to a fire in their home even if they remove their hearing aid at night.

[Local FRA Spokesperson] says, “It is vital that people who are deaf or hard of hearing ensure they have the right smoke alarm technology in their home to protect them – and that they test them regularly, to make sure they work!"

“Many people with hearing loss could be at serious risk if they don’t have the right alarms in place. Specialist alarm systems provide valuable time to escape from a blaze in the home. Without it, lives could be lost.

“Anyone unsure about the alarms they need should contact [local fire and rescue service] for a free Home Fire Safety Visit. We are here to help make sure your home is as fire safe as possible.”

Home Fire Safety Checks offer people the opportunity to get invaluable advice from their local fire and rescue service about planning escape routes, positioning alarms and ensuring that appropriate working smoke alarms are fitted in your home.

[Local fire and rescue service] is passing on vital fire safety information by [insert details of any local activity].

For advice specific to you and your home, complete your own home fire safety check at www.ohfsc.co.uk.

- ENDS -