



**NFCC**  
National Fire  
Chiefs Council


# Fire Kills Campaign

## Monthly Briefing Pack

### March 2024 – Smoke alarm testing

HM Government

**YOU ARE AROUND  
10 TIMES MORE  
LIKELY TO DIE FROM  
A FIRE IF YOU DON'T  
HAVE WORKING  
SMOKE ALARMS.**

 **Check you have working  
smoke alarms on every  
floor and test monthly.**

**FIRE  
KILLS**  
LET'S PREVENT IT

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## **1. Introduction**

Welcome to the monthly briefing pack for March, covering smoke alarm testing. This information pack provides details of national activity that may support local fire and rescue services in their local delivery.

### ***National advertising update***

The Fire Kills national advertising has its final burst in March, with one week of radio, digital audio and social media advertising running from 4 to 10 March. This is the fifth burst in the on/off strategy, which has run from November, designed to push home the regular testing message, with monthly reminders.

The advertising will be promoting smoke alarm testing, but the adverts themselves have been tweaked to better emphasise the importance of having multiple smoke alarms, rather than just relying on one or even just one on each floor.

We urge FRSs to support the national advertising until the end of March. Advertising resources – a variety of social media assets, audio and video files – have been made available to FRSs.

These resources are in a toolkit designed to enable FRSs to extend the reach and impact of the national advertising campaign within their areas. We hope this proves useful in your local engagement and prevention activity. The toolkit can be found on the NFCC website, [here](#)

### ***Fire Kills distribution list***

These briefing packs, as well as notifications of campaign opportunities, new materials and resources, are sent to over 200 recipients across all fire and rescue services in England. If you would like to review who in your FRS receives these updates and/or update the list to ensure it goes to all those who would like them, please email [James Webb](#).

### ***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](#).



## 2. Smoke alarm testing messages

### *Smoke alarm testing*

The national smoke alarm campaign began in 1988 to encourage people to install smoke alarms in their home. Since 2003, the primary message of the Fire Kills campaign has been regular testing of smoke alarms.

To build on the messages of national advertising, we are promoting smoke alarm testing throughout March.



*Smoke alarms save lives, but only if they work. Test yours at least monthly to make sure they are in good working order.*

There are a number of other smoke alarm messages that sit alongside testing:

- The easiest way to protect your home and family from fire is with working smoke alarms - get them, install them, test them. They could save your life.
- Fit at least one on every level of your home and test them at least monthly.
- Ten-year sealed battery smoke alarms are the best option. They are slightly more expensive, but you save on the cost of replacing batteries.
- If it is a ten-year alarm, you will need to replace the whole alarm every ten years.
- Never disconnect your alarms or take the batteries out if it goes off by mistake.



- The ideal position to install an alarm is on the ceiling in the middle of a room and on the hallway and landing so you can hear an alarm throughout your home.
- Don't put smoke alarms in or near kitchens or bathrooms where cooking fumes or steam can set them off by accident.
- If your home does not have smoke alarms, your fire and rescue service can provide advice.



### **3. Key Dates**

#### **No Smoking Day**

No Smoking Day on 13 March provides local fire and rescue services with an opportunity for local interventions around giving up smoking and/or safe disposal of smoking products.

#### ***Messages***

Quitting smoking altogether is the best way to remove the risk of having a cigarette/smokers' material-related fire. However, many people might be reluctant to quit, so may need to be reminded of the need to ensure they put their cigarettes out, right out.

#### ***Put it out. Right out.***

- If you aren't ready to give up, take precautions to prevent a fire.
- Always ensure that cigarettes are fully extinguished
- Never smoke in bed
- Use a proper ashtray – never a wastepaper basket
- Make sure your ashtray can't tip over and is made of a material that won't burn.
- Don't leave a lit cigarette, cigar or pipe lying around. They can easily fall over and start a fire.
- Take extra care if you smoke when you're tired, taking prescription drugs, or if you've been drinking. You might fall asleep and set your bed or sofa on fire.
- Keep matches and lighters out of children's reach.

## 4. National Resources

### **National advertising campaign toolkit**

National advertising videos, audio files and social media assets are available for use by FRSs through the campaign toolkit, available on the NFCC website, [here](#).

### **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.

Please contact [James Webb](#) if you have any queries.

## Fire Kills Campaign

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



Archive



Awareness Days and Weeks



Brand



Cost of living fire safety campaign



Covid-19 Fire Prevention Resources



Fillers



Fireworks assets



Industrial Action



Kids



Leaflets



Monthly assets



Personal Light Electric Vehicles



Photos & Icons



Posters



Social



Translated resources

### **StayWise**

The online emergency services educational resources platform, StayWise, has a wide range of lesson plans, interactive games, activities and other resources to promote fire safety – and other safety messages – to children and young people.

Many resources link to the other areas of the curriculum, allowing fire safety messages to be relayed as part of maths, English and science lessons, for example. Visit and promote the site – [www.staywise.co.uk](http://www.staywise.co.uk).



### **Online home fire safety check tool**

The NFCC tool has been developed to complement the in-person home fire safety visits. It allows for a self-assessment of a household's fire safety, taking into account the individual circumstances and providing person-centred, tailored advice. The tool has also proven very useful in identifying those people more vulnerable to fire and in securing referrals for in-person visits. The tool is now referred to on Fire Kills literature and on [FireEngland.uk](http://FireEngland.uk).

For more information on how your fire and rescue service can get more from the tool, please get in touch with [James Webb](#).

The screenshot shows the landing page for the online home fire safety check tool. At the top, there are logos for the NFCC (National Fire Chiefs Council), Fire Kills (with the tagline 'LET'S PREVENT IT'), and Safelincs (Fire &amp; Safety Solutions). The main heading reads 'Welcome to the online home fire safety check', with 'home fire safety check' in red. Below this, there is a paragraph explaining that the tool is a partnership between the NFCC, Fire Kills, and Safelincs, designed to help users identify fire risks in their homes. Another paragraph states that the tool offers tips and advice to reduce risks and provides a personalised fire safety action plan. At the bottom, there are three blue boxes, each with a 'Top tip' icon and a corresponding illustration: 'Fit smoke alarms' (illustration of a house with smoke alarms), 'Plan your escape route' (illustration of a person standing by an open door), and 'Get out, stay out and call 999' (illustration of a mobile phone with '999' on the screen).

## **5. Draft social media posts**

### **Smoke alarms**



- *Smoke alarms save lives, but only if they work. Test yours now and monthly. #FireKills #SmokeAlarms*
- *Test your smoke alarms at least once a month. #FireKills*
- *Working smoke alarms save lives, but only if they're in the right place. One on every level is an absolute minimum! #FireKills*
- *Take responsibility for your household's safety – fit working smoke alarms on every level of your home. <http://bit.ly/1istP3H> #FireKills*
- *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. #OnelsNotEnough*
- *Press to test your smoke alarms, it could just save you and your loved one's lives. #PressToTest*

### **No Smoking Day**

- *Accidental fires started by cigarettes kill more people than any other fire. When smoking, make sure you #PutItOutRightOut. #NoSmokingDay*
- *Just one last cigarette? Make sure you put it out, right out before you go to bed. Never smoke in bed. #FireKills #NoSmokingDay*

## **6. Template press release**

**Smoke alarms save lives. Make sure yours work. Test them now.**

As part of the Fire Kills campaign, **[local Fire and Rescue Service]** is asking people to test their smoke alarms regularly and make testing them part of their household routine. Why not circle the first of every month on your calendar and tick it off when you have tested your alarms?



This month **[local Fire and Rescue Service]** is encouraging everyone to make fire safety a priority by ensuring they have enough smoke alarms in the home and that they work. It only takes a few seconds and saves lives.

Smoke alarms can give someone the few extra seconds they need to escape in a fire. While the majority of homes across the country now have alarms fitted, most people are not aware that the average alarm has a lifespan of just *ten* years and then needs replacing.

**[Local Fire and Rescue Service]** is asking people to make sure that their alarms are up to date and up to the job.

To keep your alarms in working order:

- Make sure there is at least one smoke alarm on every level of your home;
- Test your smoke alarms by pushing the button every month
- Check that your smoke alarms are less than 10 years old
- Change the batteries every year. Never remove them.
- Fit smoke alarms in the right place - on landings and hallways and near bedrooms. Also consider fitting them in rooms which have electrical appliances – e.g. a heater or charger – or other fire risks
- Take a moment to check on your loved ones who may need help to ensure they're fully protected.

**[Suggested quote] [Local spokesperson]** said:

*“Smoke alarms can offer vital protection for you and your loved ones, but most people simply fit and forget – they don’t know if it might be coming to the end of its lifespan or not working at all.*

*“For most of us, there is nothing more important than keeping our loved ones safe and secure. So, if your alarm is getting past its best or your top floor is missing an alarm of its own, fit new ones, test them at least once a month and protect your loved ones.”*

For advice specific to you and your home, [complete your own free home fire safety check](#).

**- ENDS -**