



Dumfries and Galloway Fire and Rescue Authority Service Improvement Plan 2010/2011

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& Galloway*

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Chairman's foreword



I am very pleased to introduce Dumfries and Galloway Fire and Rescue Authority's Service Improvement Plan for 2010-11.

The Fire and Rescue Authority is proud of its Fire and Rescue Service and recognises that Dumfries and Galloway has, for many years benefited from a professional, flexible and dedicated workforce in its Fire and Rescue Service.

The Authority remains committed to maintaining these high quality services and, where appropriate, to modernise the Service to continue to meet the challenges posed in today's ever changing world, in collaboration with our staff, communities, other Fire Authorities and our local partner organisations.

The Service Improvement Plan is a key strategic document, which will set out the priorities of the Fire and Rescue Authority, ensuring that the Service continues to provide a professional, efficient and cost effective Fire and Rescue Service to all the communities within Dumfries and Galloway.

As Chairman of the Fire and Rescue Authority I would welcome your views on any aspect of the proposals set out in this year's Service Improvement Plan and I look forward to receiving your comments.

Ian Blake
Chair of Police, Fire and Rescue Committee

Chief Fire Officer's introduction



It is with great pride that I present my first Service Improvement Plan for Dumfries and Galloway Fire and Rescue Authority.

A famous philosopher once said "In this world the only constant is change" and in recent years that's the way it seems to have been for Fire and Rescue Services across Scotland. However, change should not always be seen as something to be suspicious of.

The changes that have been introduced over the past 4 years have brought many benefits to the communities of Dumfries and Galloway. With an emphasis on our proactive prevention programme there has been over 12,000 Home Fire Safety Checks carried out in that period, fires are down 13% and there has been a significant drop in both unwanted false alarms and hoax calls. The Service has also contributed to both the corporate aims of the Council and the Community Planning Partnership.

Over the four year average there has however been an increase, in non-fire related incidents, such as our attendances at Road Traffic Collisions and to serious flooding incidents across the region. We will, with the support of our partners, make every effort to reverse these trends. The improvement proposals set out in Appendix 1 of this Plan will build upon the good progress that has been achieved to date.

The Fire and Rescue Authority continues to provide excellent support to the Service and provides the political leadership needed to drive forward change.

Finally I would like to acknowledge all Fire and Rescue Service personnel, both front line and support staff, for all their hard work in continuing to deliver a first class, cost effective range of services to our communities.

Gerry Campbell
Chief Fire Officer



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Our aim and objectives

The Authority is influenced by a number of policy drivers determined at National and local levels which give a sound base for its Service Improvement Plan, these include:

At National Level

- The Fire (Scotland) Act 2005
- The Civil Contingencies Act 2004
- The Local Government Scotland Act 2003

At Local Level

- Dumfries and Galloway Council's Corporate Plan 2007-2011
- Dumfries and Galloway Single Outcome Agreement 2009-2011
- The Community Plan for Dumfries and Galloway 2009-2012

Aim:

To save lives and reduce risks

Objectives:

Our pledge to the public is that we will:

- Invest in preventing fires and accidents
- Respond quickly when you need us
- Be prepared to deal with major incidents

Our commitment as an organisation is to:

- Engage, listen and learn
- Be Innovative and improve
- Care for the environment
- Be effective and efficient
- Be representative, respectful and responsible

What you can do to help us

We have also published three simple actions for the public to take to help to protect themselves from fire and other emergencies:

- Make sure you have at least one working smoke alarm on each floor of your property
- Drive your vehicle safely and within the speed limits
- Prepare an action plan in case of fire or flood



Section 1

What has been achieved since last year?

The Fire Authority's Service Improvement Plan for 2009/10 contained a set of Integrated Risk Management planning actions; this section contains an overview of progress set against these actions.

Community Safety

Home Safety

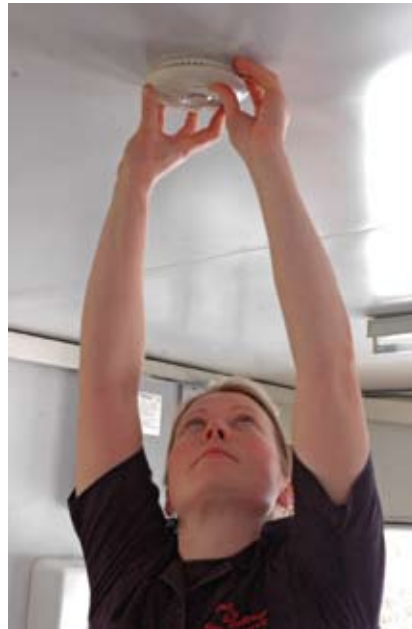
The Statistics indicate continued progress in reducing fires in the home. Home fire safety advice and fitting smoke alarms continue to have a positive impact on the number of accidental dwelling fires and the effect of those fires.

The end of the year saw the Service meet its three year Community Safety Strategy target of 10,000 home fire safety checks as well as providing fire safety advice to a wide variety of community groups.

In partnership with Age Concern Scotland several electric blanket campaigns successfully removed old and poorly maintained blankets.

Increased engagement with youths and young people, in conjunction with our call challenge policy has resulted in achieving our targets for hoax calls and small fires.

A Partnership Register has been established and the Service will seek new partners to deliver mutually beneficial community safety initiatives.



Road Traffic Collisions

The Service is now an established member of Dumfries and Galloway Road Safety Partnership where the main role is engagement and encouragement. The Partnership has established 3 key themes: trunk roads, rural roads and young drivers. All secondary school pupils received road safety input through the hard hitting "Choices" presentation.

In respect of young drivers a scheme which delivers driver training as an alternative to prosecution was successfully rolled out across the Stewartry. This initiative will be developed across Dumfries and Galloway.



A76 2009

Legislative Fire Safety

The introduction of the Fire Scotland Act 2005 Part 3 required the Service to audit non domestic premises. The Service provides both an advice and enforcement role designed to encourage compliance and improve safety in proportion to the risk. This has been particularly important for those duty holders who are subject to fire safety legislation for the first time.

False alarm calls at premises with Automatic Fire Alarm systems rose slightly and continue to be responsible for a large proportion of operational calls. Premises which have the most actuations receive ongoing contact by the Service's Safety officers to work together to reduce actuations. Improved management procedures are often successful.



Reducing Fires

Table 1 highlights that there has been a substantial drop in most types of incidents. However Road Traffic Collisions and Flooding incidents have shown a small but steady rise, and the Service will, with the support of partners, introduce strategies to tackle these upward trends.

Over the past 12 months the Service has worked extensively with children and young adult groups on a range of safety and citizenship initiatives. It is particularly encouraging to see the number of hoax calls made to the Service reduce considerably in recent years.

Table 1

Operational Response Statistics annual averages over the last two 4 year periods	Average 4 years 2001/02 2004/05	Average 4 years 2005/06 2008/09	Average % increase/decrease
All Fires	790	688	Down 12.9%
Accidental Dwelling Fires	130	124	Down 4.6%
Deliberate Dwelling Fires	22	17	Down 22.7%
Dwelling Fire Deaths	1	2	Up 20%
Dwelling Fire Injuries	23	23	Static
Road Traffic Collisions	128	135	Up 5.5%
Flooding	19	20	Up 5%
False Alarms due to Apparatus	570	490	Down 14%
Hoax Calls	65	29	Down 55.4%
Attacks on Firefighters	4	2	Down 50%

Our Emergency Response

(Resilience and Planning - Improving the effectiveness of our emergency response)

Risk Management - Identifying vulnerable groups

By identifying the associated risks to people, property and the environment and using historical trend information we refreshed our policies for responding to emergency incidents during 2009. Fire Station Risk profile documents were produced, which assist District Managers to target our finite resources and improve service delivery.

Flood Response - Supporting communities before, during and after serious flooding



Whitesands during November 2009 floods

We completed a pilot programme of Home Flood Risk Visits which assessed properties and offered practical advice on how to minimise damage from flooding. Following positive feedback the Service will now, in conjunction with community partners introduce an annual programme of Home Flood Risk Visits aimed at targeting those properties most at risk.

Our ability to respond to serious flooding was enhanced with the introduction of a combined Flood and Fire Rescue Tender to Annan Fire Station. This appliance has a similar firefighting capacity to a standard Fire and Rescue Tender but it also has the ability to carry the Service's trained Water



Flood Rescue Tender



Rescue Team, inflatable boats, and associated equipment. This major project will take another step nearer completion in 2010 with introduction of a similar unit at Newton Stewart and the initial development of a Flood Mitigation Unit. A unit which will be developed to carry equipment for helping householders and businesses clean up after a flooding event.

Personnel Welfare - Looking after our staff

To continuously improve the safety and welfare of our staff and in compliance with the requirements of the Workplace Health, Safety and Welfare Regulations 1992 we have provided a dedicated self-contained welfare appliance. The appliance provides basic but essential facilities at incidents remote from the built environment, a function which has proved extremely difficult in the past.

Operational Assurance - Ensuring effective operational response

As a consequence of an internal restructure and the positive outcomes of the 2008 Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Operational Assurance Review, we have increased the capacity of our Operational Assurance, Resilience and Development Team. This increased capacity will support a wide range of projects which, together with the adoption of our "seven core operational threads", are designed to improve the effectiveness of our emergency response during 2010/11.

Resilience - Dealing with major emergencies

To discharge the requirements of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (CCA), we will continue to support Dumfries and Galloway's Strategic Coordinating Group and various sub structures that exist. This multi-agency working has resulted in the production and publication of Dumfries and Galloway's Community Risk Register. The Service is now in the process of supporting the development and review of a range of multi-agency emergency plans, including Flood response plans, major incident plans and Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) response plans. A key duty of Category One Responders is to ensure that if an emergency occurs suitable response arrangements exist. We actively participate in the development and delivery of a robust multi agency Training and Exercising Programme which is aimed at testing emergency response arrangements and reflects the risks contained in our Community Risk Register.



Minister for Community Safety, Fergus Ewing (centre) attending Firelink launch

Firelink - Effective communications at operational incidents

In 2008 we created a local project team to oversee the introduction of a major national project funded by the Scottish Government which would upgrade our existing radio communications infrastructure to a digital radio network. Over the past two years the Fire Control Room infrastructure has been put in place, the Service's operational vehicles have had their radios and mobile data

terminals installed and we have completed the training of all our key staff. Although the installation of the Firelink project has been completed locally the national project is still ongoing. On completion, all Fire and Rescue Services will be operating on one digital radio system; this will allow any radio on the system to communicate with any other radio on the system anywhere in Scotland and eventually anywhere in the United Kingdom. Locally our partner 999 Services are now operating on the same digital network which allows us to have one common communications system available at major incidents. During 2010 we will test the resilience of the system and evaluate the increased operational benefits.

Training – Operational Competence

Our Road Traffic Collision Extrication Team from Stranraer travelled to Frankfurt, Germany in October to participate in the 2009 World Extrication Challenge, competing against the World's top thirty Extrication Teams. The team ranked 15th in the World and once again demonstrated the high standards, commitment and skill brought by Fire and Rescue Service Personnel every day to the communities of Dumfries and Galloway.



Stranraer Extrication Team

The Service has developed an Incident Command Training and Assessment Strategy which will be implemented over the next 24 months. This will ensure



that all those who may find themselves in charge of an incident have the skills and competence to deal with them safely and effectively and so improve crew safety and raise health and safety standards at operational incidents.

New Equipment – Operational Fleet

The Service has completed a review of its operational fleet in order to ensure it maintains the most effective, efficient and flexible operational response. As a result it has commissioned a number of new vehicles that enhance the Service's capabilities at operational incidents.

The Service has also taken delivery of its new Incident Command Unit which has been part funded by the Scottish Government. Locally, this will provide us with enhanced command support facilities at major incidents whilst also forming an integral part of the National Resilience Framework for Scotland as a coordination/communication facility.

The Future: What are we planning to do?

The Fire and Rescue Authority is influenced by a number of policy drivers determined at UK, National and local levels, and these form the basis of the 2010/11 Strategic Improvement Plan. These key themes are set out in the next five sections



Commercial Building Fire, Dumfries 2009

Section 2

Emergency Response

The safety of our staff, created through Operational Policy and Safe Systems of work, and the need to maintain and develop the skills required to carry out Intervention activities is key to effective Service Delivery. As a result of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Services Operational Assurance Audit and in line with our own performance management systems the Service developed and introduced an Operational Assurance Audit programme in 2008. A comprehensive review of this programme will be undertaken together with the adoption of the following "seven core operational threads" which are aimed at improving operational response.

- Developing and Implementing new operational policy and guidance, and reviewing and updating existing operational policies.
- Responding to National guidance and ensuring it is reflected in our policies.
- Responding to Operational Debriefs and implementing improvement where necessary.
- Developing site specific Tactical Plans and a Training and Exercising programme that reflects our Community Risk Register.
- Integrating our specialist skills and New Dimension assets into core service delivery.
- Ensuring our Gold, Silver and Bronze Commanders are command competent.
- Establishing a culture of continuous improvement, through a formalised system of audit, review and performance monitoring.

The "seven core operational threads" will become embedded into our workload through our District and Functional plans leading to a stronger more effective operational response and improvement in community safety.

The recently concluded Scottish Government Review on Flood Response and the damaging effect of the serious flooding in November 2009, coupled with expert opinion from the Scottish Environment Protection Agency forecasting higher flood risk due to extreme weather such as storms and rising sea levels has caused us to



Minister for Community Safety, Fergus Ewing, meeting with Annan Flood Response Team



revisit our flooding response strategy. We are working with other Category One Responders and the Council to reduce the impact of flooding and to improve our response when it happens. A key element of the work is raising public awareness of flood risks and lessen the impact when it happens. When wide spread flooding occurs we can not respond to everyone immediately so we want to work with communities to make sure that we respond to those in greatest need, first.

In 2009/10 we commissioned two Flood and Fire Response Tenders, based at Annan and Newton Stewart, we will now build on that initial provision and upgrade our equipment and training for dealing with water related incidents such as rescuing people from stranded cars or flooded houses, or for mitigating the effects of flooding in homes and properties once flooded. This will lead to better cover for our communities, greater safety for our staff.

Section 3

Community Safety and Legislative Fire Safety

The current Community Safety Strategy set out a three year plan for 2009/12. The Strategy is refreshed annually to ensure it supports Dumfries and Galloway Council's Single Outcome Agreement, Corporate and Community Plans.

Following the Scottish Government Community Safety Study report, which highlighted the need for a partnership approach to fire deaths and injuries, the Service will seek further opportunities to identify and work with external partners in the statutory and voluntary sectors to protect those most at risk.

Home Fire Safety Checks will continue to be a main focus to reduce the number, severity and effects of fires in those most at risk in the community. The Service also demonstrates significant contributions to outcome 3 of the Single Outcome Agreement – feeling safe and respected within the Community, and has a specific role in improving Community Safety by reducing the number of fatalities and injuries caused by fire, as contained within the Community Planning Safety Strategy.

A revised Scottish Government Road Safety Framework for Scotland has set demanding targets for reductions in road deaths and injuries by 2020 and the Service will continue to play a role through education and engagement as part of Dumfries and Galloway Road Safety Partnership with a focus on rural and trunk roads as well as young drivers.

Following a review of the impact of the fire safety legislation introduced in October 2006 the Service will continue to offer support and advice to businesses to ensure compliance with the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005 and supporting regulations is proportionate to the risk.

Section 4

Asset Management

The Service's Asset Management Strategy aims to manage the full life of an asset from procurement to disposal through the overarching ethos of **'One point of entry and one point of exit'**.

This strategy was refreshed in 2009 and will now incorporate a 10 year projected Capital programme to mirror Chief Fire Officer Association Scotland Finance Committee's reporting procedure on the future distribution of capital grant. In order to comply with best practice we will also prioritise future capital projects using the Capital Scoring Mechanism as outlined within the CIPFA (Local Government Directors of Finance Section, Scotland) 'A Guide to Asset Management and Capital Planning in Local Authorities (2008)'.

All of our assets require 'long term capability management' (LTCM) to ensure the Services' commitment to both local intervention, national resilience and the reduction of corporate risk. To secure this, the Service will utilise the new electronic asset register to ensure the monitoring and management of its assets.

In 2009 we developed a comprehensive 'Climate Change Strategy' that has now been integrated into our overall 'Asset Management Strategy'. The Service recognises this as an important issue and intends to play an active role in the Scottish Sustainable Development agenda, seeking new and innovative ways of reducing the impact of global emissions within the local environment.

Over the next three years the Service will review its current shared services arrangements to ensure that best value principles are being applied and implemented, maximising the efficiency savings that can be achieved through cross sector, multi agency collaboration.

The establishment of the Centre of Expertise (Fire and Rescue, Scotland), a centre that specialises in procurement for Scottish Fire and Rescue Services, has enabled us to capitalise on economies of scale achieved through the purchasing



of equipment and services from a common collaborative framework contract. The Service will explore and take advantage of the emerging opportunities that this has created.

Section 5

Workforce Management

The Service's Workforce Development Framework and associated strategies aim to support the delivery of a high performing Fire and Rescue Service. We will continue to make significant investment in developing our employees not only for their current roles within the evolving Fire and Rescue Service but also in preparing them for future challenges and career opportunities.

In line with our commitment to the principles of Integrated Personal Development System (IPDS), the Service has fully embedded the use of Assessment and Development Centres (ADCs) for all Wholetime and Fire Control staff to assist in identifying future leaders at all levels. These processes will continue but we will monitor their effectiveness and delivery framework, modifying them where required in order to ensure that the 'best' candidates emerge to occupy these vital roles.

The Service recognises that its most valuable asset is its workforce and that identification of potential for leadership at an early stage in an employee's career is important for the advancement of the organisation. In order that staff feel able and comfortable to apply for promotion a scheme which offers coaching and allocates mentors to assist employees will be established and developed.

Developing Firefighters to meet the requirements of their role is a key component of securing a competent, skilled, safe and diverse workforce and a fundamental part of the IPDS. In 2010 we will introduce a three year Firefighter maintenance of skills programme developed to allow a structured delivery of all core competency subjects to personnel. In line with national priorities, the Service will also explore the feasibility of the provision of carbonaceous fire behaviour training facilities as part of this skills programme. In continuing to develop critical incident management skills we will be introducing an Incident Command Competence Policy linked to a programme of training and assessments that will ensure that all operational personnel will have the necessary skills and knowledge to take charge of an incident.

The Service's commitment to equality and diversity for all employees and for the communities we serve is now clearly presented in the Single Equality Scheme 2009–12, which combines previous Gender, Race and Disability equality schemes and also recognises issues surrounding age, sexual orientation and religion or belief. In 2010 the Service will implement the action plan associated with the Single Equality Scheme to build on the considerable work and progress made in this field over previous years. The action plan addresses directly our general and specific duties under equalities legislation, while going beyond current legislative requirements to apply the duties' standards for all the 'strands' of diversity. By implementing this plan, the Service firmly commits to achieving a diverse workplace and a Service tailored to the needs of the different communities within Dumfries and Galloway.

Section 6

Planning and Performance

During 2009/10 the Fire Authority were presented a series of strategic reviews in relation to the work of the Service:

- Prevention and Community Safety
- Intervention
- Asset Management
- Workforce
- Financial Management
- Planning and Performance

These reviews have provided Members with a greater insight into the roles and responsibilities of the Fire Authority and members have identified areas of further scrutiny for 2010/11.

The new Fire and Rescue Framework 2009 (currently making its way through the parliamentary process) has a number of key objectives relative to performance. "The need to examine the efficient use of resources within the context of Best Value." "The need for a refreshed approach to performance measurement, public reporting and self assessment."

The Service has over the years developed its performance management framework and currently much work has been undertaken in 2009/10 to



implement the Authority's performance management system (Covalent) across the Service. Good progress has been made but there is recognition that further work will be required during 2010/11 in order that managers of the Service are able to monitor and track progress on the various plans and strategies.

In order to bring cohesion to the Service planning, health and safety and performance measurement functions the Service will seek to bring together a Risk Management Team. This will support the performance management framework and business continuity planning and assist with identifying areas for improvement.

In the current economic climate the efficiency agenda is at the forefront of Service planning. The Service produced its first Efficiency Statement in 2008/09 and the drive continues to look at new ways to provide the same service for less cost or improved service for the same cost. The key is innovation and by the very nature of the Service best practice needs to be shared widely. As efficiencies are becoming increasingly more difficult to achieve year on year the Service will explore the potential for Shared Services both within the Authority and in the Fire Sector.



Service Improvement Plan: Key Themes and Actions

1 Emergency Response

Refresh the Fire and Rescue Authority's policies for responding to emergency incidents. To include:

- Improving operational preplanning and risk information gathering.
- Establishing an annual review process for operational response policies.
- Enhanced Command and Control arrangements.
- Upgrading our equipment and training for dealing with and for mitigating the effects of flooding.
- Creating and developing an operations assurance team with a remit to monitor and report on operational performance.

2 Community Safety and Legislative Safety

Refresh and update the Fire and Rescue Authority's Community Fire Safety Strategy for 2009/12. To include:

- Developing the Home Fire Safety Programme.
- Developing Road Safety education through Dumfries and Galloway Road Safety Partnership.
- Introducing and delivering a programme of Home Flood Information Visits to occupiers of properties at risk of flooding.
- Applying Fire Safety legislation to protect life proportionate to the risk.

3 Asset Management

Refresh the Fire and Rescue Authority's Asset Management Strategy for 2009/12. To include:

- The continued introduction of a comprehensive asset register.
- Effective and efficient arrangements for the maintenance and repair of property, hydrants and premises.
- Implementation of the Fire Authority's Climate Change Strategy.
- Ancillary fleet revision to ensure it supports Service Delivery objectives.
- Procurement practices are reviewed to ensure alignment with best practice and national frameworks.



4 Workforce Management

Refresh the Fire and Rescue Authority's Workforce Development Framework and underpinning strategies. To include:

- Ensuring that all Incident Commanders have the skills and competence to safely and effectively manage operational incidents.
- Developing firefighters specialist and core skills through the delivery of collaborative and maintenance of skills programmes.
- Reviewing the Service's organisational development agenda in relation to recruitment and Assessment and Development Centres.
- Supporting staff development through a coaching and mentoring framework.
- Implementation of the Single Equality Scheme.

5 Planning and Performance

The Fire and Rescue Authority will carry out a series of strategic reviews and assessments in 2010/11 to reflect its Best Value and Scrutiny commitments. To include:

- Developing and implementing a co-ordinated approach to Service Risk Management.
- Renewing and refining business continuity management arrangements.
- Producing a programme of areas identified by Members of the Fire Authority for future scrutiny.
- Exploring the potential for Shared Services within the Authority and the Fire Sector.
- Improving the processes for data capture to identify, monitor and assess efficiencies more effectively.



Have your Say – Consultation on the 2010/11 Service Improvement Plan

The Fire and Rescue Authority will be consulting on the key themes and actions set out in the Service Improvement Plan for 2010/11, from January 2010 until 20th April 2010. Any comments or views will be considered by the Fire and Rescue Authority at its meeting on 27th April 2010.

The Fire and Rescue Authority welcomes any views on the content of this document or on the way we deliver our services.

We would welcome your views and feedback on issues or actions. We will ensure your views are taken into account and here is how to have your say. You can contact Dumfries and Galloway Fire and Rescue Service by any of the methods listed below.

You can write to:
Chief Fire Officer Gerry Campbell
Dumfries and Galloway Fire and Rescue
Service Headquarters
Brooms Road
DUMFRIES
DG1 2DZ

Or contact telephone number 01387 260988

or e-mail gerry.campbell@dumgal.gov.uk

Key Messages to Stakeholders

This is an opportunity to have your say on the future direction of the Service. The views of the stakeholders will inform the final Service Improvement Plan. A summary of all the responses received, along with any replies to the points raised, will be made available on request.



Further Information

The Service Improvement Plan for 2010/2011 contains two additional Appendices.

- Appendix 1 contains a detailed action plan which provides further information on all elements of the Strategic Review and assessments.
- Appendix 2 contains a detailed overview of the progress made against the key actions set out in the Authority's 2009/2010 Service Improvement Plan.

Both of these Appendices can be found by following the link on the Council's website www.dumfriesandgallowayfire.gov.uk More Information / Fire Prevention and Risk Management / More Information / Integrated Risk Management Planning.

Alternatively, a hard copy is available by contacting the Service's Risk Management Department on 01387 252222.

If you would like some help understanding this or need it in another format please contact 01387 260331



Top Ten Fire Safety Tips Protect yourself and Your home:

- Fit a smoke alarm and check it regularly. (We recommend installing a ten-year alarm).
- Make a fire action plan so that everyone in your house knows how to escape in the event of fire.
- Take care when cooking with hot oil and think about using thermostatically controlled deep fat fryers.
- Never leave lit candles unattended.
- Ensure cigarettes are stubbed out and disposed of carefully.
- Never smoke in bed.
- Keep matches and lighters away from children.
- Keep clothing away from heating appliances.
- Take care in the kitchen! Accidents whilst cooking account for 59% of fires in the home.

Take special care when you are tired or when you've been drinking. Half of all deaths in domestic fires happen between 10pm and 8am.

