



Fire safety starts at home: protecting what matters most

As the leaves turn and the nights draw in, this marks the beginning of a season filled with warmth, celebration - but also an increased risk of fire. This time of year should prompt us all to think carefully about fire safety in our homes.

Fire safety isn't just a seasonal concern - it's a year-round priority. But winter is a particularly important time to take stock, make checks, and ensure your home is as safe as it can be.

It happened to us: How a fire changed everything

A tenant from Selby shared their experience after a fire in their home in 2024:



“I never thought it would happen to me. A fire started in the neighbouring property and escalated into our house, the next thing I knew, the fire brigade was at my door.

The property was severely damaged and I lost my sofa, curtains, and half my kitchen. I didn't have insurance, and replacing everything was a nightmare.

It wasn't just me - it was my neighbours, too. We all had to leave our homes, which was really frightening. The smell and the smoke was awful - I wouldn't wish it on anyone.”

Let us in: safety checks save lives

The council understands that privacy is important, but gaining access to your home for safety checks is vital. These visits allow us to assess fire risks and take action to reduce them - whether that's installing new fire doors, checking smoke alarms, or identifying hazards in communal areas.

If you live in a block of flats or sheltered housing, you'll receive a fire safety booklet at the start of your tenancy. Please read it carefully and follow the guidance displayed in communal areas.



Why fire safety matters more than ever

257 people lost their lives and over 5000 were injured in property related fires last year in the UK (2024-25) Most of these occur in the home, and tragically, many happen between midnight and 6am - when people are asleep and unaware of danger. Smoke alarms are your first line of defence, giving you precious minutes to escape. That's why North Yorkshire Council checks smoke alarms annually and replaces or upgrades them when needed.

If your smoke alarm isn't working or you don't have one, please contact the council immediately on **0300 131 2 131** and say **"housing repairs"** when prompted.

Plan your escape: be ready, just in case



If a fire does break out, you may only have minutes to escape. That's why it's crucial to plan ahead:

- Keep all escape routes clear of clutter.
- Know where your door and window keys are.
- Close doors at night to slow the spread of fire.
- Never obstruct exits with bulky items or rubbish.
- If you live in flats, make sure you understand the fire safety guidance provided in communal areas.

Think before you charge: avoid battery fires

Charging devices overnight or while you're out might seem harmless, but it's one of the leading causes of domestic fires. This is especially true for electric bikes and scooters, which use lithium-ion batteries. These batteries can overheat, especially if they're part of a converter kit bought online that doesn't meet UK safety standards.

Safety tips for charging devices:

- **Never** charge electric bikes or scooters while you're sleeping or away from home.
- **Don't** block escape routes with charging equipment.
- **Always** use the correct charger and follow manufacturer instructions.
- **Unplug chargers** once you've finished charging.
- **Never** cover chargers - they can overheat and catch fire.



Free home fire safety checks

North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service offers free home fire safety visits. These checks are designed to help you identify risks and make your home safer.

To find out if you are eligible for a home fire safety visit please complete the online home fire safety check by scanning the QR code or going to **safelincs.co.uk/hfsc/SPO**

You can also call **01609 780150** to speak to a member of the fire service team.

At the end of the online check, you will be provided with safety advice relevant to you. Then, if you are eligible for a visit, you will be asked to submit your contact details.



Contents insurance: protect what you love

Your home is full of things you love - that's why Contents Insurance matters. It gives you financial protection for your belongings if the worst happens - especially if fire strikes.

As your landlord, we insure the building and anything we provide. You may need to arrange cover for your own personal contents and belongings to make sure they're protected.

RSA has over 20 years' experience working with councils, housing associations, landlords and tenants. There's no excess to pay on claims, and no fees for changing your details or cancelling your policy.

It may not cost as much as you think - prices start from as little as 45p per week, £1.47 per month, or £15.65 a year for contents cover*.

Go to **northyorks.gov.uk/home-insurance-council-tenants** or call RSA on **0345 671 8172**.

*Prices shown are for £4,000 of contents insurance cover, based on postcode area and include a transaction fee. They exclude accidental damage and optional covers. The price you pay will depend on your individual circumstances, postcode and cover chosen. RSA price data March 2025.

Keeping everyone safe

While accidents happen, there are also times when fires are caused by negligence or deliberate actions.

North Yorkshire Council may take action against those responsible. This may include tenancy action leading to formal legal proceedings, or other measures in order to ensure everyone's safety.

We all have a role to play in keeping our homes and communities safe.

Please follow fire safety rules - for your safety and for the people around you.

Go to **northyorks.gov.uk/fire-safety-matters** for more information and to book a fire safety visit



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You can request this information in another language or format at **northyorks.gov.uk/accessibility**

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