

FIRE SERVICES EXAMINATIONS BOARD

STUDY NOTE

EXAMINATION

LEADING FIREFIGHTERS EXAMINATION

PAPER

FIRE SAFETY, EDUCATION & ENFORCEMENT

SUBJECT

COMMUNITY FIRE SAFETY

ITEM

FIRE SAFETY IN THE HOME

STUDY NOTE No.

1203

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY NOTE

This study note has been prepared as the basis of study in connection with the qualifying examinations for promotion.

Candidates will be expected to demonstrate knowledge of the information contained in the study note and understand how it should be applied:

The 'References' made at the end of the Study Note are included for information only and candidates will not be expected to study these as part of the bibliography.

FIRE SAFETY IN THE HOME

1. Introduction

The proactive prevention and education efforts carried out by fire brigades and others, to reduce preventable deaths and injuries to householders within the station area have become known as "Community Fire Safety".

This study note relates to the advice a Leading Firefighter may have to give to members of the public in respect of **Fire Safety in the Home**.

The advice may be given or requested at events, lectures and presentations, during home visits or following a telephone call and includes:

- The prevention of fire
- The detection of fire
- In the event of a fire in the home
- Calling the Fire Service
- How to choose and use a fire extinguisher in the home

2. The Prevention of Fire

The underlying principle of 'fire prevention' is to separate fuel from any potential source of ignition.

(a) Chip pans/ deep fat fryers

Such fires can be prevented by the use of a thermostat controlled deep fat fryer.

However, chip pan fires remain one of the most common causes of fire in the home, so simple guidelines should be followed.

1. Never fill the pan more than one third full of fat or oil.
2. Dry the food before placing it in the pan.
3. Test the temperature by putting a small piece of bread or potato in the pan. If the bread or potato crisps quickly, the oil is ready.
4. Never add food to the pan if the oil begins to give off smoke. Turn off the heat and leave the oil to cool.
5. Never leave the pan unattended when the heat is switched on. Check that the handle of the pan is not over a hot ring or sticking over the edge of the cooker, where it could easily be knocked over or be reached by children.

(b) Smokers Materials

Each year many people suffer fatal or severe non-fatal injuries through smoking and dozing in bed or an armchair/settee because lighted cigarettes fall onto and ignite their clothing, bedding, or the upholstery of the seat. In each case it is has been made very clear that the smoke and flames have not wakened them.

It is important that matches and lighters are kept out of the reach of children. When they are left lying around children are often tempted to play with them. Parents should be made aware of the dangers. Matches and lighters are tools not toys.

Child-proof lighters and matchboxes are now available and parents should be encouraged to buy them.

All smokers materials should be carefully extinguished. The contents of ashtrays should always be cold before being emptied outdoors. Ashtrays themselves should be solid, stable and made of non combustible material.

Cigarettes should never be left unattended even in an ashtray as they can often burn back, fall onto an armchair, newspapers or fabrics and smoulder unseen for a considerable time before breaking out into a serious fire.

No one should smoke in bed. This is especially important when a person is under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

(c) Fires and Heaters

Open fires

A fireguard should always be placed around an open fire. Clothes, newspapers and other materials should never be placed on the fireguard. A mirror should never be placed above a fire as a person's clothes could catch fire while using it. The chimney should be swept at least once a year to ensure there is no build up of soot in the chimney. Petrol or paraffin should never be used to light open coal/ wood fires.

1. *Portable Heaters*

General

When intending to buy any type of portable heater, care should be taken by the purchaser to ensure that it carries the British Standards Institution (BSI) kitemark, and that it is regularly serviced thereafter.

As with open fires, portable heaters should be correctly guarded and, if young children are at home, provided with an all-enclosing guard.

They should be kept well away from furniture and soft furnishings such as curtains and cushions. Care should be taken to position them where objects will not fall on them and they should never be placed close to beds.

It is recommended that people sit at least 1 metre (3 feet) from a heater.

Clothes should not be dried on or in front of portable heaters.

It is important to make sure that portable heaters are placed where they can't be knocked over or tripped over.

They should never be sited between occupants and their main, and possibly only escape route, such as a hallway or stairway landing.

If the heater is to be used in one place for a long time it should be fixed securely to the floor or wall.

Other useful precautions are:

- Do not move a heater while it is alight and switched on;
- Do not leave a portable heater on if young children or animals are left unattended;
- Do not use flammable adhesives, cleaning fluids or aerosol sprays near a heater
- Keep aerosols away from any heat source.

2. *Portable Gas Heaters*

There are many forms of powerful domestic heaters available which are fuelled by cylinders of liquified petroleum gas (LPG).

When changing the cylinder:

- This should be done in the open air. If this is not possible, windows and doors should be opened to increase ventilation before doing so. It should never be done on a stairway or other escape route.

All sources of ignition should be extinguished, including cigarettes and pilot lights, other heaters and electrical appliances should be turned off, if it is intended to change the cylinders indoors.

- The valve on the empty cylinder should be checked to ensure that it is closed before disconnecting the heater. The valve on the new cylinder should not be turned on until the connection to the heater has been securely made.
- The flexible hose inside the heater should be checked each time the cylinder is changed to ensure that it has not become cracked or worn. Any hose showing signs of wear should be checked by the supplier of the heater.
- A search for any suspected gas leak should be made by brushing soapy water onto the flexible hose and fittings. If a leak is found, the heater and cylinder should be taken to the open air. Neither the cylinder nor the heater should be used until the faulty part has been replaced.

Any spare LPG cylinders must always be stored upright, and should be stored outside whenever possible. They should never be stored in basements, near drains, under the stairs or in a cupboard containing electric meters or equipment.

3. *Paraffin Heaters*

Only premium grade paraffin should be used as fuel. No other fuel should be used.

When the heater is to be refilled:

- The heater should be extinguished and allowed to cool before refilling commences.
- Wherever possible, the tank should be refilled outside the building.
- The fuel container should be refilled to just below the maximum level to allow for expansion when the paraffin warms up.
- The paraffin should never be allowed to overflow or drip onto the floor, and any spillage should be cleaned up immediately.
- Before lighting it, care should be taken to ensure that the heater is standing level, preferably on a non-combustible base, and is away from draughts.

Any spare fuel should be kept outside the home and preferably limited to 9 litres (2 gallons). The fuel should be kept in purpose-made containers and stored away from sources of heat.

(d) *Electrical Safety*

Electricity is often overlooked as a possible fire hazard. Maybe this is because there is no flame. However, there are many thousands of fires each year which are reported to have been caused by electrical faults, accidents or by the misuse of electrical equipment.

Plugs and Flexes

Some electrical appliances are designed to be left on continuously. The manufacturer's instructions should always be followed. If the owner is still unsure, he/she should check with the supplier who should be able to offer assistance. All other electrical appliances should be switched off and unplugged when not in use. Plugs should be removed carefully and not removed by pulling the flex.

The maximum current loading for an electrical outlet is 13 amps, whether this is from a single electrical appliance or from a number of appliances connected via an adaptor or trailing lead. 13 amps is equivalent to a total consumption of 3kW (3000 watts).

The safest system of all is one plug to be used in one socket at any one time.

Only three pin plugs and trailing leads which conform to the British Standard and carry the kitemark should be used.

If an adaptor or trailing lead is used with too many appliances connected to it, the socket and the main wiring circuit in the house may be overloaded. This can cause overheating which in turn leads to a fire starting. If an adaptor must be used ensure that it has a correctly rated fuse fitted and is BEAB approved.

When buying new electrical equipment look out for the BEAB Mark of Safety. This means that it has been tested and approved by the British Electrotechnical Approvals Board.

Wiring a plug

The wiring colours must be learnt and followed when fitting a plug. They are:

Earth - Green and yellow (previously Green)

Neutral - Blue (previously Black)

Live - Brown (previously Red)

Always ensure that the correct fuse has been fitted for the appliance. A fuse is a safety device designed to stop overheating in faulty appliances. If the wrong fuse is fitted and a fault develops this can result in a fire starting.

If in doubt about the correct fuse to use, check the manufacturer's handbook for the appliance or consult a qualified electrician, but a safe guide is:

- Appliances up to 700 watts require a 3 amp fuse.
- Appliances between 700 and 1000 watts require a 5 amp fuse.
- Appliances above 1000 watts require a 13 amp fuse.

Wiring

Warning signs of dangerous wiring are:

- Hot plugs and sockets.
- Fuses that blow for no obvious reason.
- Lights flickering.
- Brown scorch marks on sockets and plugs.

If any of these signs are spotted, the Electricity provider or a qualified electrician should be asked to check the wiring.

Regular checks of the wiring in a home should prevent these danger signs from occurring. Either the local Electricity provider or an electrician on the roll of the National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contracting should be contacted for this purpose.

Other dangers that may be found are:

- Worn or damaged cables and flexes. These should be cut back and rewired by a qualified electrician.
- Cables running under carpets or lying trapped under furniture - cables should be run along the side of a wall where no one can stand on them.
- Signs of 'DIY' repairs to electrical equipment.
- Incorrect use of an extension cable. Make sure that this is fully unwound.

Electrical cables should never be repaired or rejoined with insulating tape. The cable should either be shortened with no joins in it, or be replaced.

(e) Electric Blankets

Electric blankets should conform to the British Standard and carry the kitemark, this will be shown on the label. They should be kept dry, stored flat, and serviced once a year or in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions, as appropriate. Folding or creasing can damage the internal wiring and cause overheating.

When the blanket is on the bed ensure that both the lead and the switch/heat control hang freely and that the electric flex is not twisted, coiled, laid across the blanket or tucked under the mattress or covers.

Underblankets should be tied to the bed/mattress and a check made that the head of the blanket is not placed at the foot of the bed. The blanket must be switched off and unplugged before the person gets into bed. It is important to read the instructions for overblankets because some are fitted with thermostatic controls which permit safe all-night use.

Once the electric blanket is out of guarantee, it should be serviced once a year or in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. The shop where it was bought should be able to advise on servicing arrangements.

A blanket which has scorch marks or exposed elements or is soiled should never be used. The blanket, flex and plug should also be checked periodically for detached tie strings, frayed edges, damaged insulation and loose electrical connections. If the blanket has become wet it must be dried thoroughly before it is switched on again.

Never use an underblanket over a person or an overblanket under a person, and never use two or more electric blankets one on top of the other.

3. The Detection of Fire

The home contains many items which, once ignited, will easily burn and quickly produce dense smoke and fumes in sufficient quantities to provide a real and serious risk to life.

Many of the fatal and non-fatal casualties caused by fire in the home could be prevented if people had an early warning of fire and were able to get out in time. The fitting of smoke alarms greatly improves the possibility of people achieving this objective.

(a) What is a Smoke Alarm?

Smoke alarms are self contained devices which incorporate a means of detecting a fire (smoke detector) and giving a warning (alarm). They are about the size of an adults hand and are normally fitted to the ceiling. They detect fire in its earliest stages and sound a loud warning alarm which provides those precious few minutes which allow the occupants to escape safely from the fire.

(b) How many Smoke Alarms to Fit

The number of smoke alarms to be fitted in a home will depend on the circumstances applicable to each case. Fires can start anywhere so the more that are fitted, the higher the level of protection.

For maximum protection, an alarm of the most suitable type should be fitted in every room except:

- the kitchen, because the fumes from cooking will trigger the alarm;
- the garage, because the exhaust fumes from the car will trigger the alarm;
- the bathroom, because the steam will trigger the alarm; and
- the boiler room, because battery operated alarms will not generally function properly in temperatures above 30°C (100°F);
- a refrigerated room, because battery operated alarms will not generally function properly in temperatures below 4°C (40°F).

Cigarette smoke will not normally set off an alarm.

For minimum protection, if the home is on one level, one smoke alarm may be enough to provide a sufficiently early warning of fire.

If the home has more than one level, at least one alarm should be fitted on each level. In this case a combination of optical and ionisation alarms, preferably interconnected, will give the best protection.

(See 'Types of Smoke Alarm')

(c) Where to Fit Smoke Alarms

Smoke alarms should be fixed onto the ceiling and should normally be fitted at least 30 centimetres (12 inches) away from any wall, light fitting and heating/air conditioning outlet vent and as close to the centre of the room, hallway or landing ceiling as possible. The manufacturer's instructions should always be read before fitting commences.

Additional considerations will need to be applied where a ceiling is of an unusual configuration, eg a beamed ceiling.

If your home is on one level - For minimum protection the alarm should be fitted in the hallway between the sleeping areas and the most likely sources of fire, eg the kitchen and living rooms.

If your home has more than one level - For minimum protection one alarm should be fitted at the bottom of the staircase with a further alarm on each upstairs landing.

Should a person choose to fit a single alarm in a home having more than one level, care should be taken to ensure that it is fitted where it can be heard throughout the home when it operates, particularly when the occupants are asleep. Normally this would be at the top of the stairs. If the alarm cannot be heard throughout, additional alarms should be fitted.

(d) The Type of Smoke Alarm to Choose

Smoke alarms for the home are readily available in supermarkets as well as DIY, hardware and electrical shops. There are two types of smoke alarms which relate to the two types of fire commonly found in most homes. Consequently, the best protection would be a combination of both types of smoke alarm. Ideally, mains powered alarms with a battery back up power supply are the best option as continuity of power supply is achieved. However, battery powered alarms of either type will provide good minimum protection.

All alarms must conform to the British Standard and carry the kitemark.

(e) Types of Smoke Alarm

The two types of smoke alarm mentioned above are:

Ionisation; and
Optical

1. Ionisation

This type of detector is very sensitive to small particles of smoke produced by flaming fires, such as chip pans, and will detect this type of fire before thick smoke is produced.

They are marginally less sensitive to slow-burning and smouldering fires which give off larger quantities of smoke before flaming occurs.

They operate by searching for tiny changes in an electric current flowing in the air between two electrodes within a special chamber. When smoke enters the chamber, the current flow alters and the alarm sounds.

2. Optical

These are more effective at detecting larger particles of smoke produced by slow-burning fires, such as smouldering foam-filled upholstery and overheated PVC wiring. They are marginally less sensitive to free burning flaming fires.

They operate by sensing smoke particles when they enter a chamber in which a light beam pulsates every 10-20 seconds near a photocell. When smoke enters the chamber, the light falling onto the electric cell is deflected and the alarm sounds.

Each type of alarm looks similar and is powered by either a battery (1 or 10 year life), or mains electricity, or a combination of both. Some may be interconnected so that any smoke detected at one point can raise the alarm at all the others. This is particularly useful in large houses.

Some have an additional facility such as:

- an emergency light, which can be valuable should a fire occur at night, where stairs need to be negotiated possibly when the mains electricity has been affected;
- a silence button (hush button), for use where false alarms can be a nuisance, eg when cooking. When the hush button is operated, the alarm will be suppressed for several minutes before automatically resetting. During this period the alarm will bleep every 40 seconds to indicate that it is in the hush mode. The alarm will remain sensitive to high smoke levels and will override the hush facility if the smoke level builds up. The hush provision should remove the temptation to remove the battery from a smoke alarm when cooking - a dangerous practice which renders the alarm useless in the event of a fire.

(f) Persons with a Hearing Impairment

Many people with a slight hearing loss are still likely to hear a conventional smoke alarm but it should be remembered that this can be improved by two or more alarms being electrically connected so that smoke detected in one room will set off all alarms in the house.

Persons with a severe hearing impairment may require a vibrating pad which can be placed under their pillow at night and/or a flashing strobe light actuated by the alarm. These devices are available from different outlets from addresses available from your Brigade.

(g) Testing and Maintenance

Smoke alarms need very little maintenance and the manufacturer's instructions should always be followed in testing either the circuit or the sensor.

However, in the absence of such information it is recommended that the way to test the smoke alarm is to press the test button on the alarm, if fitted. If the ceiling is high, testing can be achieved by carefully using a step ladder and/or a brush handle, stick, snooker cue, etc to reach the test button.

In testing the sensor, candles, cigarettes, matches and other naked flames should never be used. If dropped, these could actually cause a fire. A better alternative is to use one of the testing sources currently on the market.

These tests should be carried out weekly as a habit and part of a household routine.

Batteries with a specified life in a smoke alarm must be replaced before that period expires. At the same time, vacuum cleaning the inside of the smoke alarm and wiping the casing and slots will ensure that dust does not block the sensor chamber. Where alarms are wired to the main electricity supply, this must be switched off before this work is carried out.

It is suggested that the testing and maintenance should be associated with specific dates, eg the monthly test always on first day of the month, the annual battery change and maintenance on a special date which is likely to be remembered (eg New Year's day).

It must be realised that domestic smoke alarms have a limited life due to the deterioration of the electrical detector mechanism. The detector's life is specified by the manufacturer's guarantee period. When this time expires, the smoke alarm should be replaced and the discarded unit disposed of appropriately.

4. In the Event of Fire in the Home

(a) Planning an escape route

If a fire occurs in a home it can develop quickly and spread producing heat and large amounts of dense smoke and fumes. The occupants will only have minutes in which to safely make their escape. That escape may have to be made in the dark. Escaping under those conditions will be a lot easier if an escape route has been planned and if each family member knows where to go and what to do.

General considerations should always ensure that:

- before retiring to bed, a check is made to ensure that open fires are suitably guarded, smoking materials have been properly extinguished and ashtrays emptied outside the house, and all electrical equipment which is not designed to be left on, is switched off, and the plug removed from the socket;

- all doors which open onto the escape route are closed before retiring to bed;
- exit routes are always kept free from obstructions. Beware of toys being left on stairs and objects blocking the hallway;
- there are no loose floor coverings which will cause tripping hazards;
- the key to the final exit door is easily accessible, preferably in the lock;
- the key/s to security locks on windows are readily available; and
- when a person moves in an area affected by smoke, the person should keep low as the air is clearer and cooler near the floor.

(b) Special Needs

Persons who have mobility problems might consider moving their bedroom to the ground floor and/or closer to an exit. It may also be possible to have a buzzer, intercom or telephone installed to summon help.

The installation of a system which will automatically dial out on the telephone line to summon help or send a signal to a continually staffed control room is another possibility which may be considered.

Details of the many emergency call/alarm systems which are available can be obtained from your brigade.

(c) What to do if Fire Starts

When the escape route can be used, the person finding the fire should:

- alert everyone in the house;
- get everyone out of the building quickly;
- **not** stop to get dressed or pick up valuables;
- **not** investigate the fire and, if necessary, should close the door of the room where the fire has occurred. This will restrict the spread of smoke and flames;
- **not** open any doors other than those which are needed to go through to safety;
- close doors behind them as this will restrict the further spread of the smoke and fire to other parts of the home;
- warn the neighbours; and
- telephone for the Fire Service from a neighbour's home, public telephone box, or mobile telephone.

Do not go back into the home for any reason.

The message must always be:

GET OUT, GET THE FIRE BRIGADE OUT and STAY OUT.

When the escape route cannot be used, the occupant should:

- try to remain calm;
- alert everyone in the house;
- gather the occupants in the safest room furthest away from the fire, if possible in one that has a telephone;
- close the door;
- pack towels, pillows, bed covers and clothes around the bottom of the door to keep the smoke out. The closed door should hold the fire back for up to 20 minutes;
- telephone for the Fire Service; and,
- open the window and shout "FIRE" to attract attention and stay as close to this window as possible.

As a last resort:

- If the occupants are in a room no higher than the first floor and are in immediate danger, ie smoke and flames are beginning to come through the gaps around the door, it may be possible for them to lower themselves from the window sill to arms length before dropping to the ground. Before taking this action, the occupants should first drop pillows or cushions to break their fall.
- If there are two adults with children, one adult should go first to catch the children who should be passed down slowly by the remaining adult stretching to full length before letting the child go.
- If trapped in a higher floor, the occupant should be advised to lean out of the open window for fresh air. The Fire Service should arrive in a matter of minutes and will be able to locate them more easily.
- If the window cannot be opened, or it is double glazed and difficult to break, the occupant should break the glass by using a heavy object to hit one of the bottom corners. Before climbing out, the jagged edges will need to be made safe with a towel or blanket.

No one should ever be advised to jump straight out of a window.

(d) If a Person's Clothes Catch Fire

Under these circumstances, it is natural for the person whose clothes are on fire as well as those who are close by to panic, this is not helpful.

The correct action is:

- prevent the person from running about, - this will make the fire worse;
- get them down onto the floor quickly, - this is likely to restrict the spread of the fire and reduce the effects of the fire to the head; and,
- quickly place heavy material over them, ie a coat or similar, and/or roll the person over. This will smother the fire.

Remember - STOP, DROP and ROLL.

5. Calling the Fire Service

Making a call to the Fire Service for assistance to emergency is straight forward. The important points are:

- Dial 999/112 - these calls are free from any telephone. Do not call the local fire station direct. This will not save time, indeed the number may be engaged, unobtainable, or the crews may be attending another incident in which case the call would not be answered. It will also require payphone users to insert coins which might not be readily available resulting in valuable time being wasted.
- Remain calm and speak clearly. The person taking the call needs to quickly collect as much information as possible from the caller. The need for unclear messages to be repeated wastes time.
- Give the whole address of the location of the emergency, including the town. The few extra moments will not be wasted as they will ensure that the Fire Service attends the correct address straight away.
- State what is on fire (eg house), and if anyone is trapped in the building. This information will be relayed to the crews responding to the call and enable them to pre-plan their actions.

Having made the call, it will be useful if the caller waits at a place of safety close to the building and, on the arrival of the Fire Service, provide as much information as possible about the fire and the building involved to the fire officer who is in charge.

Remember - the 999/112 call system is only for emergencies

Hoax calls waste valuable time and resources. They represent a potential risk to responding personnel as well as the general public. Hoax calls jeopardise responses to genuine emergencies - someone could die.

6. How to Choose and Use Fire Extinguishers for the Home

(a) Choosing a Fire Extinguisher

Any extinguisher bought for use in the home must conform to the appropriate British Standard or CE mark and carry the kitemark or the special British Approvals for Fire Equipment (BAFE) mark.

(b) Where to Fix the Extinguisher

An extinguisher suitable for a particular type of fire should be fitted close to that risk where it can be easily and quickly reached. The best place is on an escape route, close to an outside door. An alternative location is on a route from the living areas to an outside door, but sufficiently close to the risk.

The extinguisher should be fixed to the wall where it can be easily seen and at a height where it can be easily reached, preferably out of the reach of children. Locating fire extinguishers inside cupboards or behind doors will only waste valuable time locating them if a fire occurs. They should never be over cookers, heaters or in places of extreme heat as excessive heat reduces the efficiency of extinguishers. Additionally, as cooker fires are common in the home, an extinguisher sited above a cooker may well be unavailable when most needed.

(c) Maintenance

The manufacturer's instructions will advise a person on what they need to do to keep their extinguisher in good working order. After an extinguisher has been used, even if only partially, it must be recharged according to the manufacturer's instructions.

Extinguishers should be properly serviced once a year. There are a number of independent schemes designed specifically for fire extinguishers and their maintenance. There is also a Government sponsored national organisation for the promotion of quality in fire equipment and related services - British Approvals for Fire Equipment (BAFE) which can supply details of approved products and advice, as well as supply a list of companies approved by them to service portable fire extinguishers.

(d) Fire Blankets

Fire blankets are made of fire resistant material. They are particularly useful for smothering chip/fat pan fires or for wrapping around a person whose clothing is on fire. Fire blankets conforming to the British Standard are suitable for use in the home. These will be marked to show whether they should be thrown away after use or may be used again after cleaning in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

Fire blankets should be kept in the kitchen, mounted on a wall near the exit door and at a height that the blanket can be removed easily from its container.

(e) Tackling a Fire

General

A person discovering a fire in its very early stages may feel able to deal with it safely, using a fire extinguisher.

Before tackling the fire, the person should be aware of the limitations of the extinguisher and how it should be used. Should the person be in any doubt as to whether he/she could extinguish the fire quickly and safely he/she should not tackle it no matter how small it may be.

The main point to emphasise is that even small fires spread quickly, producing smoke and fumes which can disorientate a person and kill them in seconds.

Many people do put out small fires in their homes quite safely. However, some are injured by attempting to tackle a fire which is beyond their capabilities. The following advice should assist when advising what to do if fire occurs. People should:

- always put their own and other peoples safety first, make sure that everyone has got out of the building and also that they themselves can escape if they need to;
- ensure that someone calls the Fire Service;
- never let a fire get between them and the exit;
- never move the object which is on fire;
- only tackle a fire which is in its very early stages. A fire should not be tackled if it has started to spread, has spread to other items in the room or if it has caused the room to fill with smoke;
- try to keep their head low, beneath the level of any fumes or vapours which may be coming from the burning material;
- if the person cannot put the fire out or if the extinguisher becomes empty, he/she should leave the building together with everyone else, remembering to close the doors as they go.

It is always advisable to call the Fire Service even if only to get them to make sure that the fire has been properly extinguished.

Fat Pan Fires

A fire blanket or damp cloth may be used to extinguish a fat pan fire as follows:

- the pan should not be moved;
- the heat should be turned off if it is safe to do so but no one should lean over the pan to reach the cooker controls;
- a fire blanket, or a damp tea cloth or towel, should be placed over the pan to smother the flames, ensuring that the hands are protected by the blanket or cloth. The tea cloth or towel should be as wet as possible without dripping. **Water should never be thrown onto a fat pan fire;**
- when the fire has been extinguished, the pan should be left to cool for at least 30 minutes before moving the fire blanket or cloth otherwise the fat may re-ignite.

Fire extinguishers should never be used by the public on fat pan fires as the jet from the extinguisher may force burning fat out of the pan and spread the fire.

References

Home Office

Fire Service Manual Volume 1-Communications and Mobilising, Chapter 4

FSH 1 Fire Safety in the Home

FL 04 Electrical Safety leads to Fire Safety

FL 05 Fire Safety in High Rise Flats

FL 11 Like a child to a box of matches

FB 2 Wake up! Get a Smoke Alarm

FB3 How to choose and use fire extinguishers for the home

FB 7 Get out - Get the Fire Brigade out - Stay out

Scottish Fire Services

No smoke without fire

Safe frying prevents dying

Special care for special people

Fire action plan

Fire safety with electricity

Save lives with smoke alarms

Fire Protection Association

Fire Safety with electric blankets

Fire safety with portable heaters

Scottish Fire Service Training School

Fire safety - Community fire safety

What are the messages we want to deliver to the community?

Student note