



Stay Safe Checklist for...

Homes with chimneys

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We know that many residents in East Sussex and Brighton and Hove City have open fires in their homes. If a chimney fire is left unattended, it can spread into the rest of the house but there are some easy ways to reduce the chances of your chimney catching alight.

- ✓ Have you had your chimney checked recently? Make sure you plan to do this on a regular basis (we have further advice below) and check that chimneys and flues are kept clean and well maintained. We know that there are costs involved in checking chimneys but the investment is worth it to keep you, your loved ones and your neighbours safe.
- ✓ Have you got a fire guard to protect against flying sparks from hot embers? If not, buy one now. They can prevent furnishing and clothing catching alight as well as keep people in the room safe.
- ✓ Ensure the fire is extinguished before going to bed or leaving the house
- ✓ Have you checked your air vents and air bricks are clear of blockages? You should never do anything which will stop or interrupt the air supply.
- ✓ Is your furniture a safe distance away? Do not be tempted to sit too close. Your clothing could catch alight.
- ✓ Have you got a mirror about a fire? You should move this and any other items which might encourage people to stand too close to the fire.
- ✓ Always use a good quality fuel.

Did you know that chimneys should be swept according to the type of fuel used?

- ✓ Smokeless fuels – at least once a year
- ✓ Bituminous coal – at least twice a year
- ✓ Wood – quarterly when in use
- ✓ Oil – once a year

In addition to this, gas appliances should be serviced once a year (Any work on gas appliances requires a Gas Safe registered installer/engineer).

There are some signs you can look out for if you think you have a chimney fire:

- ✓ A loud roaring noise, which occurs as massive amounts of air are sucked through the appliance or fireplace opening and used to oxidize the combustible fuels within the system.
- ✓ Sparks and flames seen shooting from the chimney top, which can be firework like in appearance.
- ✓ A glowing or shimmering appliance outlet or connector.
- ✓ Vibrating appliance, outlet or connector.
- ✓ Flames visible through any tiny cracks in the outlet or connector.
- ✓ Smoke and odours noticeable in adjoining rooms or the loft space.
- ✓ The heating up of the chimney breast or flue pipe, in the same room as the appliance and also other rooms that the flue passes through.

The most important thing to remember is that if you do have a fire, get out of the building, stay out and call 999.