

# Smoking kills in more ways than you think

Smoking and vulnerable people



*“My mother always said he would set fire to himself one day”*

Read the full story and other real life cases at

[www.blackmuseum.info](http://www.blackmuseum.info)



**East Sussex**  
Fire & Rescue Service

## Did you know?

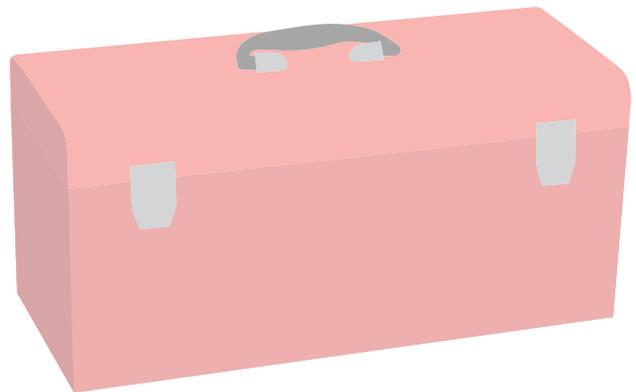
- Every five days someone in the UK dies from a fire caused by cigarettes or smoking material.
- Over recent years a number of fire deaths in East Sussex have involved elderly/immobile persons setting themselves alight, with ignition normally caused by smoking materials.
- Warning signs are often obvious - with tell tale signs of near-misses including visible burn and scorch marks.

## One death is one too many

If you are a vulnerable smoker or a carer, family member or a friend of a vulnerable smoker, please consider the information in this leaflet and act NOW to save someone's life. Those who have responsibilities under fire safety legislation (such as care homes) should use the information in this leaflet to help review their fire risk assessments and smoking policies.

Anyone with concerns about a vulnerable smoker can speak to us. We offer advice, where appropriate, on equipment such as smoke detectors, sprinkler systems, fire retardant lap covers, sprays and bedding.

Telephone - 0303 999 1000  
Email: [enquiries@esfrs.org](mailto:enquiries@esfrs.org)



## Staying safe

Without doubt and if at all possible the safest fire prevention action would be to stop smoking, call 0800 622 6968 for free local support that works.

We know that individuals circumstances differ so the following advice can be treated as a tool box – selecting the right piece of information to use in your specific situation. We encourage you to read all the advice, then sit down and talk to the people you are looking after so they understand how they can help keep themselves safe too.

## **Smokers should**

- Use a non-flame cigarette lighter to reduce the chances of an accident
- Avoid smoking when tired and taking prescription drugs (which cause drowsiness) or if they've been drinking heavily
- Never use illegal or cheap cigarettes as they may not meet strict fire safety rules
- Never smoke near to or whilst using oxygen therapy equipment
- Not wear loose fitting clothing and if possible wear fabrics which are inherently fire resistant
- Where possible, smoke in the company of others who can help if something goes wrong
- Never leave a lit cigarette, cigar or pipe unattended
- Make sure cigarettes are put out properly when finished, using an ash tray - never a wastepaper basket!

## **Looking after someone who smokes?**

- Help them to stop smoking by calling 0800 622 6968 for free local support
- Whenever possible, it is always safer for someone else to light their cigarettes
- Remove matches & lighters and replace with a non-flame cigarette lighter
- Encourage smokers to cover their lap with a fire retardant cover or wear a smoking apron
- A proper ashtray must be used and emptied – keep it within easy reach
- Discourage smoking in bed. If this is not possible consider getting fire retardant bed covers
- Ensure smoke alarms are fitted, work properly and are tested regularly
- Ensure smokers are suitably monitored and smoking only takes place in recognised and designated areas
- Check that a water-type fire extinguisher is readily available and people are trained to use it
- Smoking on airflow mattresses should be avoided, but if not possible cover with fire resistant bedding



# Want to stop smoking or have a smoke free home or car?

## We can help.

Sign up with your local FREE Stop Smoking Service and you'll get local advice, licensed effective medicine and support that really works to help you quit for good or change your smoking habits to protect your loved ones. You'll be up to 4 times more likely to quit with our support than going it alone.

To find out more about services call  
East Sussex Stop Smoking Service on  
0800 622 6968;  
text 'smokefree' to 66777  
or email [contact.quit51@nhs.net](mailto:contact.quit51@nhs.net)

