

## **SAFEGUARD YOUR NEAREST AND DEAREST FROM THE RISK OF FIRE**

When you hear a fire engine sweep down the road with its sirens blazing, it's normal to picture a home on fire, and wonder who might be in danger.

But how often do you think whether your friends, loved ones and neighbours are equipped with the right advice to protect them from fire?

Kent Fire and Rescue Service (KFRS) is appealing to parishioners to make sure their local communities take advantage of the free services on offer.

Stuart Skilton, KFRS's Head of Community Safety, said: "Perhaps you know someone who lives alone, and may be elderly or have health issues, who could benefit from our advice. Perhaps your own children are now starting a family of their own and need some tips on fire prevention."

"We can offer people practical help to reduce the risks. They might need a smoke alarm fitted, advice on escape routes and what to do if a fire starts in their home. Or perhaps they need some more extra guidance to keep safe. Our dedicated team can provide a range of specialist equipment, such as fireproof bedding and smoke alarms for the hard of hearing or those with sight problems."

"Just three breaths of toxic smoke from a fire can be life-threatening, but by encouraging those you care about to get in touch, you will be playing a huge part in preventing a fire and maybe even saving a life."

Tips on staying safe from fire:

- **Make sure you fit, and regularly test, a smoke alarm. It is the single most important piece of safety equipment in any home.**
- If you plan on using an open fire, make sure your chimney has been recently swept as build-ups of soot and ash can cause chimney fires.
- When going to bed, make absolutely certain that any open fire is either out, or pushed back into the grate and a guard used to prevent sparks setting light to carpets or furniture.
- Interior doors should always be closed when going to bed as they can dramatically reduce the spread of fire.
- Portable heaters should be dust-free and kept well away from anything that could catch fire.
- Candles should always be placed on a non flammable surface, be away from soft furnishing like curtains and never be left unattended. It is far safer to consider using torches instead of candles.
- Before using an electric blanket, make sure it is under 10 years old, check it is working order and always follow the manufacturers instructions.

For further information or to learn more about the free advice and services on offer to residents contact KFRS on 0800 923 7000 or visit [www.3breaths.info](http://www.3breaths.info). Children can also learn more about fire safety by visiting KFRS's page for kids at [www.firefighterfred.info](http://www.firefighterfred.info).