



HEREFORD & WORCESTER  
**HWFR**  
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

### Top tips for chimneys!

#### **Keep it clean**

A clean chimney can help prevent fires and structural damage to your property. Regular cleaning of your chimney or flues will eliminate the build-up of soot and clear obstructions such as bird or animal nests, leaves and debris. You will also reduce emissions into the atmosphere by assisting the complete combustion of the fuel.

It is not sufficient to use a vacuum cleaner and you should ensure your chimney flue is inspected regularly to prevent fires breaking out. Remember that fire guards can prevent serious injury or death and spark guards can prevent a serious fire.

#### **Chimneys should be swept:**

- ✓ at least once a year when using smokeless fuels
- ✓ at least once a year when using bituminous coal
- ✓ every three months when using wood
- ✓ once a year when using oil
- ✓ once a year when using gas.

Make sure you are not at risk from carbon monoxide poisoning by having appliances installed and serviced by competent engineers, never block air bricks, vents or flues and fit a carbon monoxide detector.

#### **Prevention**

- Don't use flammable liquids such as petrol or paraffin to light your fire.
- Don't burn paper or rubbish.
- Do not overload the fire with fuel.
- Go into the loft occasionally, when the fire is alight, to check for smoke from cracks, defective brickwork or mortar joints.

#### **If a chimney fire happens:**

- Leave the room, close the door and alert other people in the house
  - Get out of the house, call 999 and ask for the fire & rescue service
  - Stay out until the fire and rescue service arrive.
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- ✓ Always ensure you have a working smoke alarm in your property.
  - ✓ Always use a competent chimney sweep who is able to provide you with a certificate upon completion of their work.

Please share these messages with friends and family, and check in with those who may be older and more vulnerable.

If you would like any further advice please visit [www.hwfire.org.uk](http://www.hwfire.org.uk) or call 0800 032 1155