

Fire Service advice on storing excess waste during lockdown

Communities and key workers across the country are being asked to store the excess waste safely and securely during a national reduction in refuse collections.

Allowing flammable rubbish to build up in homes and businesses could have devastating consequences, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service has warned.

The changes to bin collections come as councils and waste collections services work to reduce the risk of infection to both staff and communities amidst the ongoing coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic.



However, firefighters are warning that allowing waste to build and increase the risk of a potentially devastating fire breaking out in or around homes and business premises, and have appealed to communities to help minimise the risk to families, staff and properties.

Assistant Chief Officer Stuart Stevens is the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service's Director of Service Delivery.

He said: "The build up of rubbish and waste, particularly bulky items such as large amounts of cardboard or furniture, represents a real

fire risk to our communities at this challenging time.

“We are working extremely closely with our local authority partners to minimise risk wherever possible, but the real work starts in the home.

“Some simple measures can help protect you, your family, your property, your staff, business and those around you from the potentially devastating consequences of a fire at this time.”

SFRS is issuing safety advice across the country as more and more people adhere to the UK-wide guidance to stay at home.

This includes information on how to avoid risks while cooking, working from home, and smoking indoors.

However, the Service is extending its advice to outdoor spaces and gardens as householders and dutyholders seek to store excess waste and bulk rubbish or consider burning excess waste.

ACO Stevens said: “If you can, store your waste such as cardboard, wood, or packaging in a safe, locked location such as a garage or shed.

“If you must store it outdoors – keep it away from the property if possible.

“If you are keeping anything inside, store it away from heat sources and open flames, or electrical outlets and equipment.

“Where possible, we would recommend you avoid lighting a bonfire to dispose of garden waste or other items – there is a great risk of fire spread and damage to the environment.”

Many rubbish and bin fires in Scotland are also started

deliberately.

ACO Stevens continued: "Fires in rubbish can be started by many things – such as warm embers or smoke ash.

"However, many are started deliberately – we are also asking everyone to ensure that they and everyone in the household including the young people in their lives are aware of the potentially devastating consequences of setting a fire.

"It can endanger lives, destroy family homes and while we continue to respond to respond to 999 calls, it could unnecessarily draw upon SFRS resources at this time of national emergency."