

# **Support firefighters to identify vulnerable friends, family or neighbours**

**The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service is reminding people to stay safe from fire this winter and support firefighters to identify vulnerable friends, family or neighbours who may need assistance.**

An increased use of heating and electricity over the colder months combined with festive lights, trees, decorations, and candles can heighten the risk of a fire potentially taking hold.



It is also important that those who are over 50 and smoke and also live alone, have mobility issues or use oxygen, or those who are living with addiction are supported by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service to reduce the risk.

The Service's Make The Call campaign was launched earlier this year and appealed directly to the family, friends, and neighbours of those who are most at risk of fire to get in touch with SFRS on their behalf to request a free Home Fire Safety Visit by calling 0800 0731 999.

Latest figures show that 446 homes in Scotland were affected by accidental fires between December 9, 2019 and January 13, 2020 which sadly claimed the lives of six people and resulted in 56 casualties.

The statistics further highlight that of the 56 casualties, a total of 19 were aged 60 or over which is almost 34 per cent.

Deputy Assistant Chief Officer Ali Perry said: "Every year we see an increase in the risk of fire in the home during the festive season and we want to support families across Scotland to stay safe at this time of year.

"One death because of a fire in the home is one too many and the aftermath of a fire can be absolutely devastating for those affected.

"That's why we are reaching out to every community in Scotland this winter – please follow our advice and guidance to help us keep you safe and help us reach the most vulnerable and elderly people in our society."

During a Home Fire Safety Visit SFRS staff will identify fire hazards and risks in the home, help plan escape routes and provide information about smoke, heat, and carbon monoxide alarms. All visits are carried out in-line with the local Scottish Government Covid-19 tier guidance and regulations.

An overall increase in electricity use alongside the traditional use of candles, Christmas decorations and lights and portable heaters or traditional fuel burning fireplaces has also been linked to a heightened risk of fire.

Communities are being asked to follow SFRS's safety advice which is widely available on the Service's website or social media channels under the hashtag #SaferWinter2020

DACO Perry advised: "By just taking a few essential steps you can massively reduce the risk of a fire in your house. If you

can't get online, then get in touch with us through your local station who will be more than happy to offer help and guidance.

"We want everyone to remember this Christmas and New Year for all the right reasons. Taking a few minutes to look at our advice and identify the hazards in your own home can help keep you and those around you safe."

Community Safety Minister Ash Denham said: "Please keep yourself and others safe over the festive period and follow the advice of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and act responsibly.

"I would urge people to Make the Call to SFRS if they think someone is particularly vulnerable and requires support to stay safe from fire within the home."

A free online home fire safety quiz is also available to everyone in Scotland.

The 'Fire Safety in the Home – Self Assessment' survey asks a series of simple questions and then automatically generates a home fire safety report unique to that household, including advice on how to rectify risks and problems.

Visit

<https://www.firescotland.gov.uk/your-safety/make-the-call.aspx> for more information on SFRS' Make the Call campaign.

For more advice on how to keep yourself and your home safe from fire during the festive season visit <https://www.firescotland.gov.uk/your-safety/festive-safety.aspx>

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