



Carrickfergus Borough

HOME SAFETY CHECKS

We offer **free home safety checks** for all residents within our electoral area, but particularly to parents of young children and people aged 65 and over.

The checks offer tips on all aspects of home safety, as well as specialist advice on topics like heating and energy saving.

A room-by-room inspection usually takes around 30 minutes and all checks are carried out by two members of staff with identity cards.

Our advisors can:

- show you the potential risk areas in your home
- carry out minor repairs or modifications, free of charge
- replace any dangerous plugs or fuses
- arrange for safety equipment to be delivered to your home
- refer you for a free smoke alarm installation.

You can apply for a home safety check by phoning the Environmental Health Department on 028 9335 8000.

Top tips for home safety:

HALL AND STAIRS

- Fit a smoke alarm on every level of your home and test the batteries every week.
- Keep the front door shut and locked to prevent little ones escaping. However, make sure adults know where keys are kept in case of fire.

Use safety gates to stop young children climbing stairs or falling down them.

- Keep stairs free from clutter to avoid trips and falls.

LIVING ROOM

- Fit fireguards to all fires and heaters and use a spark guard too if you have a coal or wood fire.
- Use socket protectors to prevent toddlers plugging in things like the iron or an electric fire.

KITCHEN

- Keep cleaning products high up out of reach and sight. If necessary, fit safety catches to low kitchen cupboards. Try to choose cleaning products that contain a bittering agent. It helps to prevent children swallowing the contents as it makes them taste horrible.
- Keep children away from hot appliances such as ovens, kettles and toasters.
- When cooking, make sure you use the rings at the back of the cooker and turn saucepan handles towards the back.
- Never leave a chip pan unattended or fill the pan more than one third full of oil.
- Keep knives and scissors well out of reach of children.

BEDROOMS

- If possible, place your child's cot or bed away from windows to stop them climbing out and away from radiators that may burn.
- Don't use pillows or duvets for children under a year old as they can suffocate if their face gets smothered.
- Change your baby's nappy on the floor to prevent falls from beds, sofas or changing tables.
- Make sure all medicines are locked away or kept high up out of reach and sight.
- Don't leave hot hair straighteners in reach of little hands.
- Keep a lamp beside your bedside in case you get up during the night.

BATHROOM

- Make sure all medicines, razors and scissors are locked up in a proper medicine cabinet or kept high up out of reach.
- Keep cleaning products high up out of reach and sight. If necessary, fit safety catches to low bathroom cupboards.
- To avoid scalds test the temperature of the bath water with your elbow before getting – the water should not feel hot or cold. We advise that you have a thermostatic mixing valve fitted to your bath hot tap to control the temperature of the water that comes out of it.
- Never leave a child under five in the bath alone – small children can drown in as little as 5 cm (2") of water and toddlers can fiddle with the hot tap and scald themselves.
- Empty the bath immediately when finished.

THROUGHOUT YOUR HOME

- Fit carbon monoxide alarms wherever there is a flame-burning appliance (such as a gas boiler) or open fire. Carbon monoxide is poisonous. You can't see it, smell it or taste it. Also, make sure that your appliances are serviced regularly and that ventilation outlets in your home are not blocked.
- Use safety glass in low glass doors and windows, or cover the panes with safety film, or board them up.
- Fit windows with locks, or safety catches that prevent windows opening more than 6.5cm (2.5") to stop toddlers and young children falling out. However, make sure adults know where keys are kept in case of fire.
- Keep the floor free of clutter to prevent slips, trips and falls.
- Never drink a hot drink with a baby on your lap, or pass hot drinks over babies' or small children's heads, or leave them with easy reach of little hands.
- Keep matches and lighters locked away or high up and out of reach.
- Practise escaping from your home so you know what to do if there is a fire.

GARDEN OR BALCONY

- Keep back gates and doors on to balconies shut and locked when not in use. However, make sure adults know where keys are kept in case of fire.
- Lock away chemicals such as weed killer or fertiliser.
- Lock away garden tools in a shed or garage when not in use.
- Check pathways and steps to make sure that they are clear and well maintained to avoid falls.
- Fill in or securely cover garden ponds and make sure there is no way into neighbours' gardens with ponds.
- Keep children away from hot barbeques and bonfires.

Further advice can be obtained from the Council's Environmental Health Section on 028 9335 8000.