



# FIRE SAFETY at Home



# Sisällysluettelo

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# Fire Safety for Every Home

**A safe home protects everyone you care about. You can bring peace of mind to yourself and those you love by understanding basic fire safety and preparing for emergencies.**

This guide, produced by the Uusimaa Rescue Departments, highlights essential fire safety tips. Review these recommendations with your loved ones.



## Prevent Fires:

- Make sure your home has enough smoke detectors and test them regularly. Starting in 2026, housing companies will be responsible for ensuring each apartment is properly equipped.
- Familiarize yourself with all exits. Keep corridors and pathways clear; you should be able to easily exit your home.
- Store basic fire-fighting equipment (like extinguishers and fire blankets) within easy reach and learn to use them.
- Don't leave candles, stoves, or other open flames unsupervised.
- Don't use damaged electrical appliances.
- Don't leave cooking unattended.
- Don't smoke indoors.



## If a Fire Breaks Out:

- Attempt to extinguish if safe—use a fire extinguisher or fire blanket, but, again, do not risk your own safety.
- Rescue other people inside.
- Close doors and windows and then get out.
- Call 112 and follow instructions.
- Once outside, get to a safe distance away and ensure emergency responders can access the scene.
- Make sure rescue vehicles have an unobstructed path to the scene—in other words, that emergency access roads (“pelastustie”) are not blocked.

If you want to ask anything about fire safety, contact an on-call fire inspector. You'll find their contact details at [www.pelastustoimi.fi](http://www.pelastustoimi.fi)

## Stay safe!

*Rescue Departments of Helsinki,  
Eastern Uusimaa, Central Uusimaa,  
& Western Uusimaa*



## Home Fire Safety Equipment

**Knowing how to tackle a small fire is an essential skill that can prevent significant property damage or even save your home.**

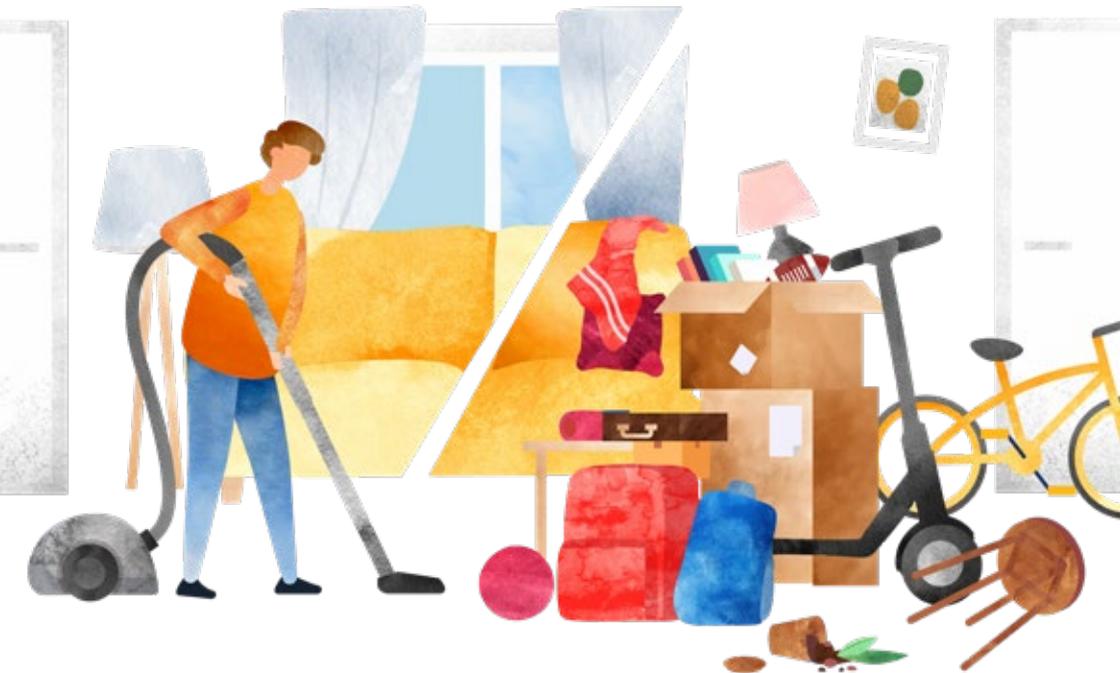
If a small fire breaks out, try to first extinguish it using basic home fire safety equipment. If unsuccessful, close doors and windows, evacuate quickly, and call 112.

The primary tools for tackling small fires are the fire blanket and portable fire extinguishers. In certain circumstances, a bucket of water or a garden hose may also suffice. Fire blankets are typically available at larger grocery stores, and portable fire extinguishers can be purchased at hardware stores.

# Keep Your Home Safe and Tidy

**Clutter and disorganization significantly increase fire risks. Clean regularly and get rid of unnecessary items.**

- Clean electrical appliances regularly; dust buildup can cause overheating and fires.
- Keep routes to exits unobstructed. Avoid placing scooters or bikes in entryways. Make sure the front door can be opened from inside without a key. Check that all doors and windows are accessible and open easy.
- Keep the balcony tidy and remove any excess clutter.
- Keep belongings in their designated storage areas—avoid cluttering hallways.
- Never store firewood or flammable materials against the walls of the building.



# Kitchen Fire Safety

**Kitchens are the most common source of home fires. Follow these guidelines:**

## Stove and Oven

- Never leave cooking unattended.
- Remember to switch off the stove once you're done.
- Regularly clean the filter of your range hood.
- Don't store items on the stove or inside the oven and keep the surrounding area tidy.

## Smoke detectors

- Because cooking vapours can sometimes trigger false alarms, it is generally not recommended to install a smoke detector in the kitchen. However, smoke detectors are essential in other areas of the home.

## Household appliances

- Vacuum behind refrigerators and freezers at least once a year.
- Regularly check that your electrical appliances are in sound condition. Do not use any that are damaged.
- Stay nearby when dishwashers or other appliances operate.



### GREASER FIRES

If cooking oil catches fire, use a fire blanket or lid to immediately smother it.

Never use water for grease fires as this can cause the fire to spread rapidly.

### FIRE-FIGHTING EQUIPMENT

Make sure there's at least one fire blanket in your kitchen within easy reach. Regularly maintain the portable fire extinguisher.



## Grilling – Gas, Charcoal, and Wood Grills

**Always have fire-fighting equipment ready when grilling.**

Additionally, make sure to check if any wildfire warnings are in effect at [en.ilmatieteenlaitos.fi/warnings](https://en.ilmatieteenlaitos.fi/warnings). Outdoor fires and disposable grills are prohibited during a wildfire warning.

### Gas Grills

- Each spring, check that your grill, LPG hose, and gas cylinder are in good condition. Note the production date indicated on the LPG hose.
- Flex the hose to ensure there are no cracks. Replace immediately if any damage is found.
- Do not lean over the gas burners while igniting the grill.
- Always close the gas cylinder valve after use.
- Remove any grease build-up from the grill.

### Charcoal and Wood Grills

- Position grills on non-combustible surfaces, away from flammable items.
- Never spray lighter fluid on glowing coals.
- Transfer the ash to a metal container with a lid and place it on a non-combustible surface. Keep in mind that the ashes may take several days to cool completely.
- Do not store firewood against walls.

# Electrical Appliances and Batteries

**Most fires caused by electrical appliances result from faulty devices, carelessness, or inattention.**



**To minimize risk, ensure that:**

- Your home's electrical appliances are well-undamaged and clean.
- Outlets, light switches, and cables are securely attached and free of dust and dirt.

## Safe Battery Charging

Charge your electronic devices (e.g., mobile phones, tablets, computers, electric toothbrushes, bikes, and scoots) safely by following these guidelines:

- Only use chargers designed for the device.
- Charge devices while you are awake and present; avoid charging overnight.
- Don't overcharge as it increases the risk of battery fire.
- Store and charge batteries in an open space equipped with a functioning smoke detector.
- Plug chargers directly into wall outlets.
- Disconnect the charging cable once your device is fully charged.
- Do not store batteries in primary exit areas such as the entryway.
- Dispose of old or defective batteries at designated recycling centres.

## Battery Fires – What to Do

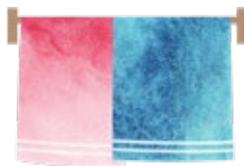
Battery fires may be difficult to extinguish. A burning battery may erupt explosively, and its fumes are toxic. The best course of action is to cool the battery. Do this:

- If possible, remove the battery from the power source.
- If possible, move the battery to a secure area where it can cool down—using oven gloves or a fire blanket, for example.
- Attempt to cool the battery. For instance, a mobile phone battery can be submerged in a bucket of cold water.
- The toxic fumes produced by a burning battery are dangerous. Avoid breathing them in.

Keep in mind that a battery that has been extinguished may start burning again. Ensure that it is placed in a location where a renewed fire will not spread. Immediately evacuate, close the door behind you, and call 112.

# Safe Sauna Use

In Finland, every year around 400 fires start in saunas. Often this is due to improper use.



## To enjoy sauna safely, follow these recommendations:

- When starting your sauna heater/stove, check that nothing is placed on top of it.
- Electric sauna heaters should be supervised when operating. Don't leave the sauna running when you leave your apartment.
- Remove the fuse if the sauna heater remains unused for an extended period.
- Do not dry laundry in the sauna.
- Keep the sauna benches free of items and store your stuff elsewhere.
- Frequently inspect the condition of your electric sauna heater. Replace or add stones when needed.

## For Wood-Heated Saunas

- Ensure that the flue damper ("savupeltti") is open at the start of heating. Close only once the fire has completely died down and no glowing embers remain.
- Make sure that no sparks escape from the stove during heating.
- Remember to arrange for regular chimney sweeping. For properties in continuous or year-round use, the fireplaces should be swept every year.
- Install a carbon monoxide alarm.



# Fireplaces and Chimney Sweeping

**Maintain the fireplaces in your home or cottage in proper condition and use them safely. In any dwelling with a fireplace, it is advisable to install a carbon monoxide detector.**

- Burn only dry wood in your fireplace. Refrain from burning rubbish—such as milk cartons or other waste materials.
- Operate your fireplace according to instructions, using only the appropriate quantity of wood at a time.
- Light the wood from the top. Maintain good airflow, which helps the fire burn more cleanly.

## Chimney Sweeping

Regular sweeping of fireplaces and stovepipes is an integral part of a building's fire safety. Chimney sweepers must be professionally qualified. Purchase this service through a company that specializes in chimney maintenance.

### Residential Buildings:

- Fireplaces and flues should be swept once a year.

### Holiday Homes (e.g., Summer Cottages):

- At a minimum, sweeping should occur once every three years. However, for fireplaces in frequent use, it may be necessary to arrange chimney sweeping once a year.

## Proper Ash Disposal

Handling ashes with care is essential, as small embers can remain active for several days.

- Douse ashes with water to cool and extinguish any residual heat.
- Transfer the cooled ashes into a lidded metal container. Store this container outdoors on a non-combustible surface—not on a wooden deck or terrace.





## Keep Stairwells Free of Clutter

**The Rescue Act prohibits storing items in stairwells as well as on the access routes in attics, basements, or storage areas. Why is this important?**

- In the event of a fire, the stairwell is the primary—and usually safest—escape route in apartment buildings. Items such as strollers, wheelchairs, and door mats can hinder both evacuation and rescue efforts.
- Furthermore, burning clutter in a stairwell produces large amounts of toxic smoke, quickly filling the passages.

**If you must evacuate a burning apartment into the stairwell, close your apartment door behind you.**

### What to Do When Smoke Fills the Stairwell?

Apartment buildings are designed to prevent fire and smoke from easily spreading between units. If you encounter smoke in the stairwell, take these actions:

- Remain inside your apartment and keep the door closed, as inhaling the smoke can be life-threatening.
- Call 112 and clearly state from which apartment you are calling.
- Use a wet towel or similar item to seal gaps around your front door and mail slot.
- If smoke seeps into your apartment, avoid inhaling it by staying low—crawl to a balcony or an open window.
- Get the attention of rescuers by shouting, waving your arms, or using a flashlight.
- Wait for help to arrive.



# Candles, Tealights, and Outdoor Fires

During the dark winter months, candles, tealights, and outdoor fires provide much-needed light and a warm atmosphere.

## Outdoor Fires and Lanterns

- Do not light outdoor fires on balconies, porches, or patios.
- Set up outdoor fires in a sturdy container on a non-combustible surface, keeping a safe distance from any buildings. The use of Swedish torches (“jätänkynntilä”) is not recommended in urban areas. They should also be at least 5–10 meters away from structures.
- Keep children and pets away from any outdoor fires and lanterns.
- Don’t light fires and lanterns during heavy rain or strong winds. Wind can tip over the container, and rain may cause splashing hazards.
- If you plan to leave the area, extinguish any outdoor fires or lanterns by smothering them.
- Ensure that firefighting equipment (such as a fire blanket and a portable fire extinguisher) is easily accessible.

## Keep these guidelines in mind:

### Candles and Tealights

- Always place candles and tea lights on a non-flammable surface. Ensure that there are no curtains, decorative fabrics, or any other easily flammable materials nearby.
- Leave sufficient space between each candle or tea light. When placed too closely, their flames may merge, increasing the risk of a fire.
- Keep candles away from children and pets.





## What to Do in the Event of a Fire

**When a fire breaks out, act quickly and decisively.**

**Always have your essential items—such as keys, your phone, and your wallet—readily accessible so you can grab them easily when evacuating.**

- If possible, try to extinguish the fire using a fire blanket or portable fire extinguisher. Prompt action with initial fire suppression can prevent the fire from spreading and causing more severe damage.

**Prioritize your safety: If the fire becomes uncontrollable, do not attempt to fight it. Evacuate immediately and assist others in leaving the building.**

- Move by crawling, as smoke and heat rise upwards.
- Close all doors and windows behind you as you leave your apartment.
- In apartment buildings, use the stairwells when exiting. Go outside, do not stay in the building.
- Once safely outside, call 112 from a secure location.
- Help guiding the fire trucks to your location.

# Teach and Practice Safety Skills with Children

**Fire safety skills begin in childhood and benefit from regular practice.**

**When children or teenagers live at home, follow these steps to ensure everyone's safety:**

- Make sure your home has at least two safe exit routes. Teach every family member these escape routes in case of a fire. Practice the routes together.
- Equip your home with a fire blanket and a portable fire extinguisher. Teach your children how to use them. Store these tools in a location where they can be easily found and quickly accessed.
- Keep matches and any other fire-starting items well out of the reach of children.
- Only light candles, tealights, or lanterns when an adult is present. Don't leave these unattended.

Install the 112 Suomi app on every family member's phone and instruct them on how to use it during emergencies.



# Preparing for Disruptions and Crisis Situations



**When major incidents occur, authorities and responsible agencies will manage the situation.**

However, your own preparedness can significantly influence how well you cope.

**Here are some situations that warrant preparation:**

- Power and water outages
- Internet or telephone disruptions
- Natural events (storms, floods)
- Hazardous material incidents
- Long-term crises (pandemics, military conflicts)

**Being prepared means you have:**

- **A Home emergency supply:** food, water, and essentials for at least three days
- **Knowledge and skills:** the ability to respond appropriately when faced with an unusual situation.
- **Resilience:** build physical and mental endurance
- **Community:** a network of contacts and the ability to help others



**You will be fine in most situations when you follow these guidelines:**

- Stay calm.
- Assess the situation: determine what is happening, recall any related safety instructions, and consider how it affects you, your loved ones, and your local community.
- Follow instructions from the authorities closely.
- Make a list of the most critical actions you need to take and then proceed to act.
- Assist others if you are able, and do not hesitate to ask for help if needed.
- If you require urgent assistance, call 112.

**Learn more about preparedness**

[suomi.fi/guides/preparedness](https://suomi.fi/guides/preparedness) | [pelastustoimi.fi/en/rescue-services/preparedness](https://pelastustoimi.fi/en/rescue-services/preparedness)

# Finland's Comprehensive Civil Defence Measures

**Finland has always placed a strong emphasis on civil defence. Civil defence is a humanitarian effort designed to protect civilians and ensure that society remains functional during times of military conflict. In such situations, authorities will provide clear guidance and instructions to the population.**

Their responsibilities include issuing warnings, evacuation, guiding people to shelters, fire suppression, and rescue operations.

Private shelters in buildings and public shelters in urban areas are maintained and made ready for use should the rescue authorities deem it necessary. Civil defence shelters protect against explosions, collapses, and hazardous substances. Shelters display a blue triangle on an orange background.

Efforts are made to maintain everyday life as normally as possible even during wartime. Evacuation may not be required if people can be adequately protected by other means. Authorities will issue instructions if evacuation becomes necessary.

More detailed information about the civil defence shelters and protection measures in your area, please visit your local Rescue Department's website at [pelastustoimi.fi](http://pelastustoimi.fi)

