GREATER MANCHESTER
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

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GREATER
MANCHESTER

Electrical Fire Safety



We provide home fire safety advice to keep you safe at home.

If you are concerned about your fire safety, or the fire safety of others, please visit our website below to complete our online assessment for personalised advice or to find out if you are eligible for a Home Fire Safety Assessment.

manchesterfire.gov.uk

Electrical fires are one of the top five causes of accidental fires in the home. Follow our advice to help prevent electrical fires:

- Only buy electrical items from reputable sellers. Make sure they meet UK product safety standards and display the UKCA or CE safety mark.
- Register electrical items with the manufacturer to be informed of any safety recalls.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for using, charging, storing and disposing of electrical items.
- Never modify or attempt to repair electrical items yourself. Always use a qualified professional.
- Keep electrical items clean, in good working order and have them serviced regularly.
- Regularly check cables, chargers, plugs and sockets for damage. Do not use them if you notice danger signs such as exposed coloured wires, melted plastic, a burning smell, sparks, smoke, scorch marks or overheating.
- Keep electrical items, leads and plugs away from water.
- Do not cover vents on electrical items.
- Turn off and unplug electrical items when you are not using them, when sleeping or when you are not at home (unless they are designed to stay on, such as fridges and freezers).
- Keep to one plug per socket. If using an adaptor, ensure the total load does not exceed 13 amps of power. Use the 'overloading sockets calculator' to check (see back page for the website address).
- Do not use block shaped plug adapters. They can pull away from the socket causing a spark.
- Do not plug one extension lead into another.
- Fit smoke or heat alarms in areas where electrical items are stored or charged and test them at least monthly.

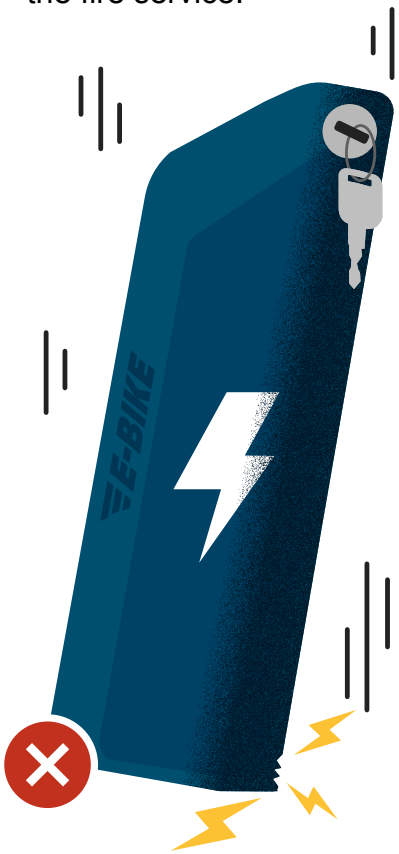


Charging electrical items:

- Always use the manufacturer's approved charger. Using the wrong charger can cause the battery to overheat and a fire to start.
- Do not overcharge electrical items or leave them charging continuously. Unplug your device once it is fully charged.
- Never leave electrical items unattended when charging. Unplug them before going to bed or leaving home. If a fault occurs, you need to be alert to it.
- Charge small electrical items, such as phones and laptops, on a hard, flat, heat-resistant surface, away from extreme heat, cold or direct sunlight.

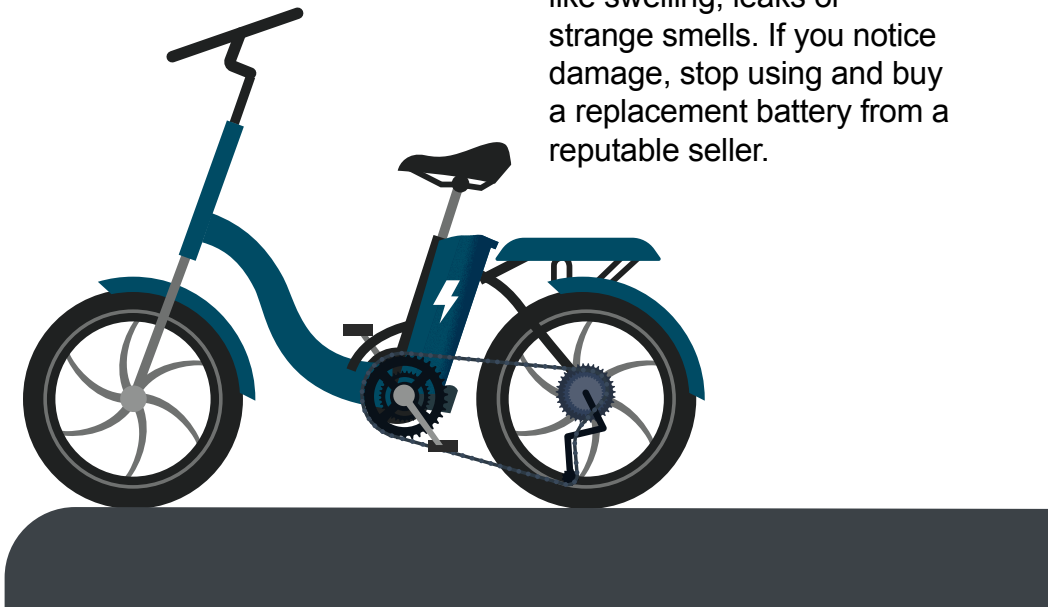
Lithium-ion battery safety:

- Damaged lithium-ion batteries are a fire risk. Avoid dropping, puncturing or exposing batteries to water.
- Store lithium-ion batteries at room temperature. Keep away from direct sunlight and anything that could easily catch fire. Where possible, store in a secure outbuilding.
- Avoid keeping multiple lithium-ion battery powered items together in one place.
- Never modify or tamper with lithium-ion batteries.
- Store batteries out of the reach of children and pets.
- Regularly check lithium-ion batteries for signs of damage like swelling, leaks or strange smells. If you notice damage, stop using and buy a replacement battery from a reputable seller.
- Always dispose of lithium-ion batteries at household waste recycling centres or designated recycling points (many shops have them).
- In the event of a lithium-ion battery fire do not attempt to extinguish the fire. Get out, stay out, call 999 and ask for the fire service.



E-bikes, e-scooters and mobility scooters:

- Only buy e-bikes, e-scooters, mobility scooters and their replacement batteries and chargers from trusted retailers and manufacturers.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for charging, storing and disposing of e-bike, e-scooter and mobility scooter batteries.
- Never attempt to modify or convert an e-bike, e-scooter or mobility scooter. Only allow a professional to carry out this work.
- Never leave an e-bike, e-scooter or mobility scooter charging unattended, when you go to bed or when you go out.
- Never charge or store an e-bike, e-scooter, or mobility scooter in hallways, communal and sleeping areas, near exits or anything that can easily catch fire. This could block the escape route. Where possible, charge or store in a secure outbuilding.
- Regularly check your e-bike, e-scooter or mobility scooter battery for signs of damage like swelling, leaks or strange smells. If you notice damage, stop using and buy a replacement battery from a reputable seller.

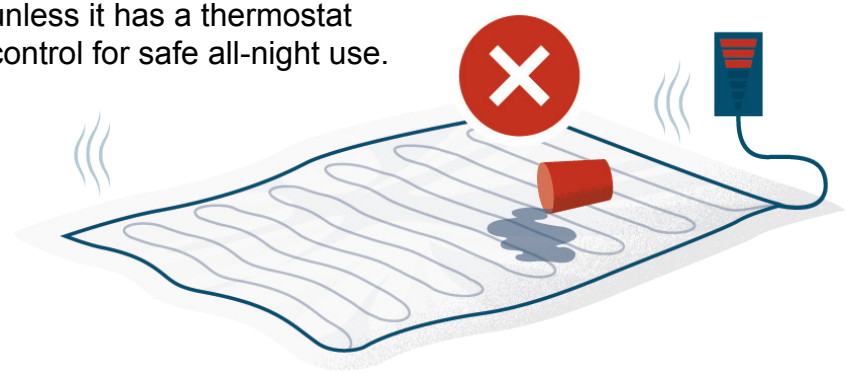


Vapes and e-cigarettes:

- Always follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Always use vapes and e-cigarettes as sold, with the correct kit and charger.
- Buy replacement chargers and the associated kit from trusted retailers and manufacturers.
- Never modify or tamper with a vape or e-cigarette, or its associated kit.
- Never use or charge vapes or e-cigarettes close to medical oxygen or where emollients or airflow mattresses are being used or kept.
- Keep vapes and e-cigarettes away from children and pets.
- Never charge vapes or e-cigarettes on beds, sofas or carpets. Charge on a hard, flat, heat-resistant surface, away from extreme heat, cold or direct sunlight.
- Never leave vapes or e-cigarettes charging unattended, when you go to bed or when you go out.
- Do not overcharge vapes or e-cigarettes, or leave them charging continuously. Unplug once fully charged.
- Regularly check vapes, e-cigarettes and their chargers for any signs of damage. If it feels hot, smells unusual or appears damaged, stop using it.
- Keep vapes and e-cigarettes away from coins or keys. Contact with metal can cause overheating and a fire to start.
- Never dispose of vapes or e-cigarettes in any of your household bins or in street bins. If crushed or punctured, the battery can ignite and cause fires in bin lorries or at waste centres.
- Return used vapes or e-cigarettes to the retailer. Shops are required to offer a take-back scheme. Or take damaged or end-of-life vapes and e-cigarettes to your local household waste recycling centre.

Electric blankets:

- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for using and storing your electric blanket.
- Only buy from a reputable retailer. Do not buy second-hand electric blankets.
- Have your electric blanket professionally tested every year to make sure it is safe to use.
- Replace your electric blanket when it is more than 10 years old.
- Regularly check your electric blanket for signs of damage, such as scorch marks, mould or exposed wires. If it appears damaged, stop using it immediately.
- Unplug your electric blanket before getting into bed, unless it has a thermostat control for safe all-night use.
- Never use a hot water bottle or have drinks while using an electric blanket. Spills can lead to electrical faults and increase the risk of fire.
- Do not use an electric blanket if you have a pressure relieving device, experience incontinence or use emollient creams.
- Always spread electric blankets out fully during use. Folding or bunching can cause uneven heating, which can lead to overheating and a fire starting.
- Always store electric blankets flat or rolled. Folding can damage the heating elements, creating a fire risk.



Useful websites:

Product recalls and alerts:
gov.uk/guidance/product-recalls-and-alerts

Register My Appliance: registermyappliance.org.uk

Electrical Safety First: electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk

Overloading sockets calculator: electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk/guidance/safety-around-the-home/overloading-sockets

Recycle for Greater Manchester: recycleforgreatermanchester.com

Fit a smoke alarm on every level of your home and a heat alarm in your kitchen. Test your alarms at least monthly.



A working smoke alarm can buy you valuable time to:

Get out **Stay out** **Call 999**

Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service
Protecting communities, working together, saving lives
Visit **manchesterfire.gov.uk** | Follow **@manchesterfire**
If you do not have access to the internet, call **0800 555 815**

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