

Think about fitting a carbon monoxide alarm

Have you thought about getting an audible carbon monoxide alarm for your home? You can be particularly at risk from carbon monoxide poisoning when you're asleep, because you may not be aware of the symptoms until it's too late. An alarm could save your life.

Instant warning

An alarm is a useful precaution. You should always ensure your fuel-burning appliances are properly installed and maintained.

It is now compulsory for all new homes in Northern Ireland to have a carbon monoxide alarm installed.

Audible alarms give an instant warning of dangerous carbon monoxide levels. The use of 'black spot labels/ cards' is not recommended.

You can find out more about the symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning at the page below:

But alarms must not be regarded as a substitute for proper installation and maintenance of your fossil fuel-burning appliances.

Audible alarms

Audible carbon monoxide alarms come in many varieties and are manufactured by a wide range of companies.

They are sold online and in many shops, including DIY/ hardware stores, supermarkets and trade retail stores.

What to look for when buying an alarm

Before buying a carbon monoxide alarm, always ensure it complies with British Standard EN 50291 and carries a British or European approval mark, such as a CE or Kitemark.

Carbon monoxide alarms should be installed, checked and serviced in line with the manufacturer's instructions.

Particular attention should be made of the lifespan of the alarm, which can range from one to six years dependent on the manufacturer and the expected lifespan of the batteries. Some have replaceable/ removable units, while others are sealed in for the life of the unit.

Where to fit an alarm

Always read the manufacturers instructions for the correct and safe location for installation of the alarm. It's not possible to give specific guidance on the exact location of a detector(s) which suits all types of premises and their usage.

Carbon monoxide is slightly lighter than air, therefore fitting carbon monoxide detectors at a low level is not recommended.

Once the alarm is fitted

Routine procedures recommended by the manufacturer (including testing) should be in the instructions supplied with the alarm and should always be followed.

Any detectors failing a routine test should be returned to the installer or supplier, or be replaced.

Never cover or paint over alarms once installed.

Always test your carbon monoxide alarm to the manufacturer's instructions.

More useful links

[Cold weather health advice and keeping neighbours in mind](#)

It's important to keep warm to stay as healthy as possible during the colder winter months. If you have an elderly or vulnerable friend or neighbour, look out for them to make sure they are safe, warm and well.

Precautions to take

Colder weather can cause a range of health problems but you can be ready for them.

[Keeping warm](#) is important – always keep the main rooms in your home, such as the living room and bedroom, heated. Warm clothing and a hot meal can also help prevent the most vulnerable people falling ill this winter.

It can help prevent colds, [flu](#) or more serious health conditions such as heart attacks, strokes, pneumonia, and depression.

Also, anyone who is invited to get the [flu vaccination](#) should do so.

There are a few easy precautions you can take to keep you and your loved ones safe during a spell of particularly cold weather:

- wear warm clothes – layers are best, including a hat
- if outside in icy conditions, wear boots or shoes with suitable grips
- make sure you have enough food and medicines
- check the weather forecast regularly
- take care outdoors, especially if roads and pavements are icy
- take regular hot drinks and food
- heat all rooms used during the day – living room to around 18-21°C (65-70°F) and the rest of your house to at least 16°C (61°F)
- if you can't heat all your rooms, make sure that you keep one room warm throughout the day
- if you use an electric blanket check what type it is – some are designed only to warm the bed before you get in and should not be used throughout the night
- never use an electric blanket and hot water bottle together as it could cause electrocution
- service boilers and appliances annually by a registered engineer to protect from the [dangers of carbon monoxide](#)
- keep in contact with trusted callers, friends and relatives should you need help and keep your mobile phone charged

You should also find useful information and advice on the following pages:

If you are worried during the winter and need help, contact or speak to a friend, relative, trusted caller or health professional. They will make sure that your needs or concerns are brought to the attention of someone who can help.

Using the health service

Should you or someone in your family become unwell this winter, think carefully about how to use health services.

Emergency and 999 services are for life-threatening and serious conditions.

Emergency Departments are the right place to go if you're injured or think you or a loved one is seriously ill.

The [A to Z symptom checker](#), pharmacist, minor injury unit, GP, and out-of-hours services are available for any other health concerns you may have.

If you get a repeat prescription, leave yourself enough time to order and collect it in advance from your GP.

More useful links

Consider joining NIE Networks and NI Water care registers

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Older people and people with a medical condition or disability should consider joining the NI Water and Northern Ireland Electricity (NIE) Networks care registers. The registers help to identify people who need extra help or support if there is an interruption to supply.

NI Water Customer Care Register

People who join the [NI Water](#) Customer Care Register can get a range of free additional services if they are an older person, have a serious medical condition, or need extra help for any other reason.

The full range of services provided to people on the register is outlined at the following link:

You can join the register by phone:

NIE Networks Critical Care Register

[NIE Networks](#) offers a critical care information service to people who are dependent on life-supporting electrical equipment.

Anyone on this register will receive up-to-date information by phone during a power cut or a planned interruption of supply.

You can find out more, including how to register, at this link:

Details of a relative, neighbour or friend can also be given to NIE Networks as an alternative contact.

More useful links

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Slow down and stay safer on the road

Going too fast for the conditions is the number one cause of people being killed or seriously injured on our roads. Drivers and riders are urged to slow down.

Speeding is no accident

Driving or riding too fast is no accident, it's a decision to drive faster than road and traffic conditions allow. It is also a decision to drive beyond your capabilities.

Unfortunately if you have an accident when driving too fast, you are much less likely to walk away from it unscathed.

[Speed limits](#) are set as an absolute maximum – the weather and conditions need to be taken into consideration when driving on any road.

Speed does not need to be high to kill or seriously injure.

Keeping safe

We all have a personal responsibility to drive or ride in a way that keeps ourselves and others safe.

Every one mph reduction in average speeds causes, on average, a five percent reduction in collisions. This could be the difference between life and death.

Everyone shares the responsibility to prevent deaths and injuries.

Drivers and riders need to:

- slow down
- pay greater attention to their surroundings
- never drive or ride a motorbike after drinking or taking drugs

Whether you're a driver or passenger, always wear a seatbelt.

Pedestrians and cyclists also need to:

- be aware of their surroundings
- make every effort to be seen by wearing reflective or hi-vis clothing

You can get more information about road safety at the page below:

The faster the speed, the bigger the mess. Please slow down – one life lost is one too many.

It is better to arrive late and alive, than to not arrive at all.

More useful links

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Dealing with issue of bullying

It's Anti-Bullying Week (13 to 17 November). This year the theme is 'All equal, All different, All together'. We all have a duty to both tackle bullying and support those who have been affected.

Stopping bullying

Bullying is an issue which can happen to anyone. It can take many forms, from physical and verbal attacks to cyber bullying.

Whether you or someone you know is being bullied, there are things you can do to stop it happening.

The first thing that you should do is tell someone about it – don't suffer in silence. You can tell a friend, a parent, a teacher if it's happening at school, or a senior member of staff if it's a problem in work.

The following pages have useful information:

If you're doing the bullying

You may think teasing people at school or work is a bit of harmless fun, but for the victim it can be no fun at all.

Try to talk to someone at school or work and explain the reasons behind your bullying. They should be able to give you support and advice about how to stop.

Cyberbullying

There has been an increase in people being threatened, teased or embarrassed through their mobile phone, tablet device or the internet, including while using social networking sites or apps.

You can find out more about it on the pages below:

Cyberbullying is just as harmful as bullying in the real world. If you see it happening, report it. Don't ignore it.

More useful links

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