



# BETTER SAFE THAN SORRY.

SAFETY TIPS FOR YOUR HOME.

# WBM.

Wohnungsbaugesellschaft  
Berlin-Mitte mbH



## **GOOD PAGES FOR BETTER LIVING.**

There are certain advantages of being a large housing association. Because our focus is on you. Our series of guides are intended to ensure the quality of your home life, improve your living conditions, prevent problems and cut costs. Benefit from our rich fund of excellent tips and important advice on home life. And feel comfortable in your own home.

### **CONTENTS**

- 3 **SAFETY**
- 4 **FIRE**
- 5 **WHAT TO DO IN THE EVENT OF FIRE**
- 6 **FIRE PROTECTION IN THE APARTMENT**
- 10 **FIRE PROTECTION IN THE APARTMENT BUILDING**
- 11 **HOUSEHOLD CHEMICALS**
- 12 **ACCIDENTS IN THE HOME**
- 14 **BURGLARIES**

## **WBM.**

Wohnungsbaugesellschaft  
Berlin-Mitte mbH

Contact: Martina Kubisch  
Corporate Communication  
Dircksenstraße 38 , 10178 Berlin  
Phone: 030. 2471 4169  
info@wbm.de  
**www.wbm.de**

Version: 4/2016

# SAFETY



## SAFE AND SOUND AT HOME.

*"My home is my castle."*

Who can't identify with this old adage? But in order to feel really at home within your own four walls you also need to feel safe. Safety begins at your own front door and ends with a slip-proof ladder. This guide provides helpful tips that make home life so much safer.

An illustration of a city at night. In the background, a dark blue sky is filled with stars and a crescent moon. A tall, thin tower with a circular top is visible on the left. In the center, a fire with yellow and orange flames rises from a rooftop. In the foreground, a lit candle with a yellow flame sits in a blue, hourglass-shaped holder. The candle is melting, with blue wax dripping down. To the right, a glass of red wine is partially visible.

## FIRE

### **NO ONE HAS A BURNING DESIRE TO SEE THEIR HOME ON FIRE.**

There's no doubt about it: nothing is as nice as being at home, but nowhere is more dangerous if a fire breaks out. The Berlin Fire Brigade extinguishes more than 8,000 fires every year. That's almost 22 fires a day. More than a third of all fires start at night. In Berlin alone, there are more than one thousand fires in residential buildings every year. All fires start out small. Carelessness, negligence and disorderliness are often the actual causes of fires. A small fire can quickly become a huge blaze that can cause devastating damage. This makes it all the more important to know how you can effectively prevent fires in everyday life without any great effort and how you should behave in the event of fire.

## WHAT TO DO IN THE EVENT OF FIRE

### THERE'S A LOT OF SMOKE WITH BIG FIRES.

Above all, fire means smoke. This is just as dangerous as the flames: it is toxic and literally takes your breath away. Plastics, paints and solvents in furniture and everyday objects emit deadly fumes during fires. If your apartment is on fire, leave it as quickly as possible and shut the front door behind you.

If the fire is not in your apartment, remain in your apartment, keep the door closed, remain by a window and pay attention to instructions from the fire brigade. Whatever you do, stay calm. If there is a fire, the first thing you should do is call the fire brigade under the emergency number 112.



## FIRE PROTECTION IN YOUR APARTMENT

### PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN CURE.

With just a few precautionary measures you can make your home safer and prevent fires from even occurring. For instance, you should never store flammable liquids, old paper and combustible waste in the apartment or on the balcony. In particular, you should remove paper and packaging from the balcony on New Year's Eve. Polystyrene panels on the ceiling should be removed without fail. In the event of fire, they will turn a room into a death trap. In just a few seconds the room is filled with acrid smoke, the polystyrene melts and drips while burning.

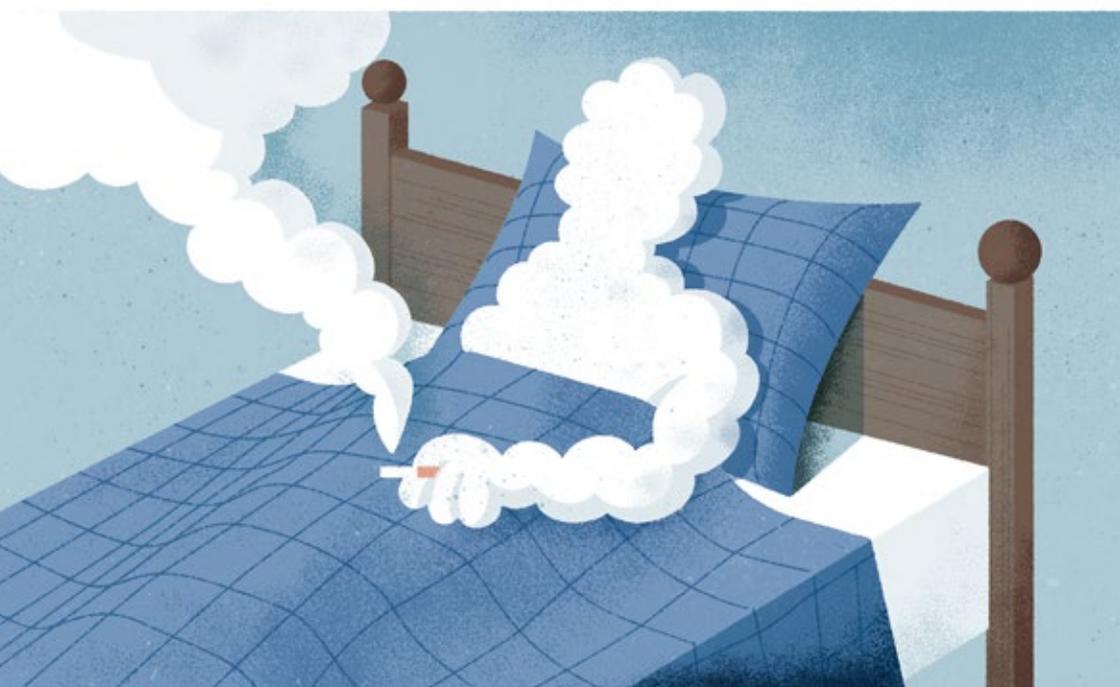
### ALTHOUGH CANDLES CREATE A COSY ATMOSPHERE,

all naked flames constitute a fire risk.



### TIPS:

- *Never leave candles burning unattended, particularly when there are small children or pets in the home. Candles should always be placed on a fireproof base at a sufficient distance to other objects – including objects above them. For your own safety you can install smoke detectors yourself. As soon as the device detects smoke it sets off an alarm. The loud signal alerts you to a fire at an early stage.*



### **CIGARETTES ARE A CONSTANT CAUSE OF FIRES.**

Fallen ash can smoulder and start a fire hours later, including in rubbish bins. It is dangerous to smoke in bed. Anyone who falls asleep with a burning cigarette in their hand risks setting the bed alight. This can result in severe burns. Burning down feathers can also release deadly fumes.

#### **TIPS:**

- *Be careful with falling cigarette ash.*
- *Always make sure that cigarettes are properly stubbed out.*
- *Do not smoke in bed.*
- *Burning cigarette butts must not be thrown out of the window or tossed from the balcony. Doing so can lead to a fire in an apartment or on a balcony below.*

## FIRE PROTECTION IN YOUR APARTMENT



### **SAFETY FIRST SO THAT THINGS NEVER GET TOO HOT TO HANDLE.**

Fires can start easily when cooking, frying or baking. You only need to be away for one moment and a fire can start if the oven has not been switched off. If fat or oil is burning in a frying pan, never attempt to extinguish it with water. This causes a fat explosion, because burning fat is much hotter than 100 °C and the water evaporates immediately. Filters in extractor hoods can also become a fire hazard if they are not regularly replaced. Filters become saturated with highly inflammable fat over the course of time. A small spark, such as from burning fat in the frying pan, is enough to set the extractor hood alight. The entire kitchen is then usually affected.

#### **TIPS:**

- *It is best to smother burning fat with a lid that fits the pot or pan.*
- *Regularly replace extractor hood filters, at the latest when the filter is yellow or the indicator strip shows that it needs replacing.*



### BE SAFE AND DON'T GET FIRED UP.

Faulty electrical equipment or cables can heat up rapidly or generate sparks if they short circuit. This can lead to fires that often remain unnoticed at first but can cause considerable damage. Heat-generating electrical devices such as fan heaters, kettles, coffee machines, electric blankets, hairdryers and irons can easily overheat as a result of unnoticed technical faults and start a fire. Avoid using extension cables with these devices. The standby function in many devices can also cause fires. It is not just safer but also saves electricity if you use power strips that can be switched on and off. Gas cookers should always be installed by a professional gasfitter and plumber working for a specialist company.

#### TIPS:

- Only use devices in perfect working condition and with intact cables. Electrical devices should only be repaired by professional technicians. Only use certified and tested electrical devices. These can be easily recognised by the VDE and GS labels on the device. Never leave electrical devices that are switched on unattended. If the device begins to smoulder, first of all pull the plug.

## FIRE PROTECTION IN YOUR APARTMENT BUILDING

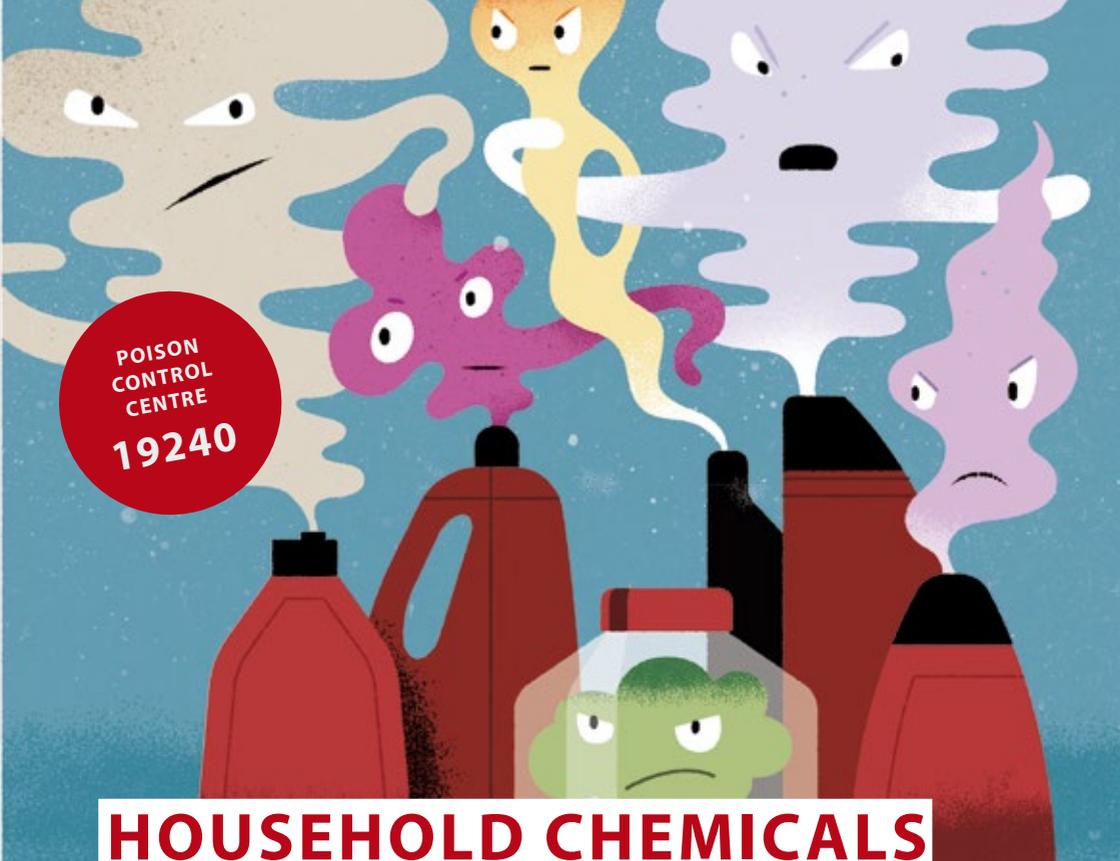


### **NEVER PLAY WITH FIRE WHEN IT COMES TO FIRE PROTECTION.**

Every resident can do something to prevent fire in their own buildings.

- Always keep front, courtyard, basement and attic doors closed, especially at night.
- It is also important to keep fire doors closed. Only closed doors provide protection in the event of fire. Fire doors with hold-open devices should not be kept wedged open. They are equipped with smoke detectors and close automatically if they detect smoke. In the event of fire, fire doors prevent smoke and fire from spreading.
- You should never lock the entrance doors to your building, since these provide your escape route in the event of fire.
- Children's prams, bicycles, large items of rubbish, flowerboxes and plants or other combustible objects should not be placed in entrance areas, corridors, recesses and basement entrances.

- You should not place shoe racks outside the door to your apartment. These are popular objects for arsonists and can be used for lighting fires. They also block the escape routes.
- Staircases are not designated smoking areas.
- Hazardous materials such as paint, varnish, petrol, tyres and polystyrene packaging should be disposed of as special refuse and not kept in the cellar.
- Fire protection equipment is located and signposted in all residential buildings. If you notice that this equipment has been stolen or vandalised, please get in touch with your landlord – for your own safety.



## HOUSEHOLD CHEMICALS

### REALLY CLEAN, BUT SAFE!

Cleaning detergents are necessary but if not used correctly, or if children get hold of them, they can quickly become a hazard. The vapours they produce should not be underestimated. If you work with such chemicals, you should regularly ventilate the room and avoid naked flames, because these can ignite the fumes. Chemical substances should generally not be mixed. If you accidentally come into contact with household chemicals with adverse effects, seek medical attention. In order to provide information more quickly in an emergency, all household chemicals must be properly labelled since the beginning of 2009. In addition to a bar code, the label-

ling includes an identification element with 15 characters. This code enables emergency doctors on the telephone to find specific information about the product in their database. Therefore when you make an emergency call, you should always have the code at hand. You should always keep chemicals in their original packaging so that you do not lose the code.

### TIP:

- *Detergents and cleaning agents should always be kept sealed and safely out of the reach of children. If you use concentrated household detergents, you should protect your skin by wearing rubber gloves.*

An illustration of a home accident scene. A person's legs in red high-heeled shoes are shown from the top, with their feet positioned on a white ball with blue polka dots. The ball is balanced on a stack of items: a blue box, a dark blue cylindrical object, a yellow box, and a grey box. This stack is placed on a brown wooden chair. To the left of the chair is a brown cabinet with a bottle on top. To the right is a blue bucket containing a black brush and a wooden broom, with another bottle next to it. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

EMERGENCY  
MEDICAL  
SERVICES

112

## ACCIDENTS IN THE HOME

Most accidents occur at home and not on the roads. For example, it is easy to trip over buckets and loose cables when cleaning the house. Unstable ladders can cause serious falls. According to statistics, the kitchen is the most dangerous place. Burns, cuts and scolds are frequent injuries that occur here. However, accidents at home can be avoided – through planning, good time management and using the right aids.

### **PUTTING SAFETY FIRST.**

Budget in enough time for major house cleans. If you want to get high up, use a stable ladder. Climbing up on a wobbly table-and-chair construction is always dangerous. Flower boxes and pots resting unsecured on the window sill or sitting on the balcony tend to be dangerous for other people. A strong gust of wind could cause them to fall and injure someone.

## ATTENTION, HOUSEHOLD ACCIDENT BLACK SPOTS!



### RUGS

Rugs and carpets should always be fixed to the floor or laid on a non-slip underlay.



### POOR LIGHTING

You are much more likely to fall where you can't see properly. Therefore, despite rising energy prices, it is better to have a bit more light – including in the bathroom and hallway.



### BATHROOM

Here, simple measures are enough to ensure greater safety. Anti-slip mats in the shower or bathtub prevent people from slipping. Grab handles provide additional support when getting in and out of the bathtub.



### **DON'T GIVE THIEVES A CHANCE.**

Not everyone who wants to enter your building is there on legitimate business. Therefore it is often better to err on the safe side. Don't open the front entrance door when the door buzzer sounds without first asking who is there and what they want. Don't let any strangers into your apartment and don't just open the door without thinking. It is always recommended to look through the peephole first. You should also ask for identification if necessary. Particularly when it's cold, young people like to meet up with friends in the hallways. Parents should make it clear to their

children that hallways and staircases are not the right place to 'hang out'. If you are not at home for a long time, or you are away on a trip or working out of town, ask a neighbour to keep an eye out and check that everything is alright. You should also get somebody to regularly empty your letterbox when you are away for longer periods of time. In addition you should tell the landlord where there is a key to the apartment. Two thirds of all burglaries take place during the day. And in more than half of all burglaries doors and windows are forced open by the simplest means.

**TIPS:**

- Even if you are just popping out for a short while, don't just close the apartment **door** but **lock it** as well. It's best to turn the key twice, since with one turn of the key the bolt is only moved a few millimetres into the locking plate.



- The same applies to **windows** and **patio doors**. You should also close windows and doors even if you are going out for just a short while. **Caution! Tilted windows are open windows.**
- Don't hide your **apartment key** underneath the doormat or in a flowerpot.

- With **glazed doors**, don't keep the key in the lock on the inside.
- If you **lose your key**, you should always have the locking cylinder changed.
- Always make sure you've removed your **apartment key** from your key ring before handing your keys to anyone, for instance if they require the car keys to repair your car.



- Important: the **front entrance door** to the building should always be kept **closed but never locked**, even at night. This is because police, paramedics and firemen must be able to open the door easily in an emergency so that they can gain access to the building. And if the front door is locked, this blocks your escape route.

**BESTELLEN SIE  
IHREN RATGEBER UNTER:  
030. 24 71 41 69  
oder [info@wbm.de](mailto:info@wbm.de)**

**ORDER YOUR GUIDE HERE:  
030. 24 71 41 69  
or [info@wbm.de](mailto:info@wbm.de)**

## **DO YOU ALREADY KNOW ABOUT OUR OTHER GUIDES?**

### **GETTING PESTS UNDER CONTROL**

Useful tips for pest control

### **KNOWING HOW IT WORKS**

All about service charges

### **DOG, CAT... HOUSE**

A wild how-to guide to having  
pets in rental apartments

### **APARTMENTS FOR SENIORS IN BERLIN**

A relaxing place to grow older

### **HERE'S TO GOOD NEIGHBOURS.**

Tips and rules to create a good  
neighbourly environment in apartment  
buildings.

### **REALLY LET OFF STEAM**

Everything you need to know  
about the right climate in your  
own four walls

### **UNLOCK. INSPECT. MOVE IN.**

Useful tips for the viewing of an apartment

### **IS THIS VALUABLE OR CAN I DISPOSE OF IT?**

Helpful tips. It's all about waste.

