



**DEVON &  
SOMERSET**  
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

## Get Sweeping for Chimney Fire Safety Week

With colder nights fast approaching, Chimney Fire Safety Week 2016 (5 – 11 September) provides a timely reminder to make sure that your chimney is ready for the winter months ahead. As part of the national Fire Kills campaign, Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service are urging householders to ensure their chimney is safe and to have their chimney swept by a registered chimney sweep.

Chimney fires accounted for over 5,000 incidents dealt with by fire and rescue services between April 2014 and March 2015. This year's Chimney Fire Safety Week calls for homeowners to clean up their act and get their chimneys swept by a registered sweep to prevent chimney damage, and, in worse cases, household fires.

- Always use a fire guard to protect against flying sparks from hot embers
- Make sure embers are properly put out before you go to bed
- Keep chimneys and flues clean and well maintained

Visit [www.chimneyfiresafetyweek.co.uk](http://www.chimneyfiresafetyweek.co.uk) for advice, tips and information on how to find your local registered chimney sweep.

**Station Manager Graham Rookes** said: “To keep you and your family safe from fire you should make sure you have your chimney swept regularly, depending on what fuel you burn, before the colder months set in and you begin to use your fire again. If the worst should happen, working smoke alarms can give you the early warning, and a fire-plan can help you ensure your family's escape in a fire – make sure you have at least one smoke alarm on every level of your home and test them monthly. And don't keep this advice to yourself – pass it on. Is there anyone you know who may need your help in organising a sweep or testing their alarms?”

How often should you have your chimney swept?

Smokeless coals	At least once a year
Wood	Up to four times a year
Bituminous coal	Twice a year
Oil	Once a year
Gas	Once a year

Graham further added: “A stove or open fire can be an ideal and pleasant way to keep warm in the winter, but without proper maintenance a chimney can become

dangerous. Latest statistics show that there are over 5,000 chimney fires a year in England, but most of these are preventable.

“All chimneys and flues should be cleaned and checked during the summer months to ensure they’re free from debris and in full working order before the heating season. A blocked or defective chimney can cause both chimney fires and carbon monoxide poisonings so it’s very important to employ a professional qualified Chimney Sweep.”

For more information, visit [www.dsfire.gov.uk](http://www.dsfire.gov.uk)

## **Ends**

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