

# SAFE AND HEALTHY WITH ENERGY



**HOAP**

HOME OWNERS' ADVICE PAMPHLETS



# HOW TO BE SAFE AND HEALTHY WITH ENERGY

Electricity, paraffin, gas, coal and wood are different forms of energy. You need to take great care in using and storing these forms of energy because they sometimes cause accidents, injury or damage to your health. Children are especially at risk, so teach your children to stay away from electrical appliances and fires.

## LIVING SAFELY WITH ELECTRICITY



Ask an electrician or someone who knows about electrical wiring to wire your house.

- Switch plugs off before pulling them out.
- Keep electrical cords away from stoves and heaters so that they do not get burnt.
- Do not put cords under a carpet to prevent people tripping over them. If the cord becomes damaged the wires can cause a fire.
- Do not try to fix an appliance while it is still plugged in.
- Do not put too many appliances in one plug socket at a time.
- Do not connect electrical appliances to the light socket. Switch the light off before changing a light bulb.
- Water and electricity do not go together. Do not use electrical appliances near water, or touch them with wet hands. Do not use water to put out an electrical fire. Use a dry chemical fire extinguisher, or sand, or a woollen blanket.



### What to do if someone gets an electrical shock



It is very useful to learn first aid so you know what to do.

- Call a doctor, ambulance or emergency service immediately.
- Switch the electricity off at the mains. You can get a shock if you try and touch the victim if the electricity is still on.
- Push the victim away from the electricity source by using a dry broom stick or chair. Cover your hands with dry rubber gloves or layers of dry newspapers before touching him/her.
- If the victim's breathing has stopped, or is not normal, apply mouth-to-mouth resuscitation and massage the heart.

## LIVING SAFELY WITH GAS



Make sure you buy gas from a well-known supplier with a safety rating.

- Keep the gas bottle and key away from children.
- Make sure the connecting pipes on your gas bottles and appliances are secure and check regularly for damage.
- If you smell gas, put out all flames and cigarettes, and open the windows.

### How to find a gas leak

Turn the gas off at the cylinder. Check all connections. Slowly turn the gas on and brush the connections with soapy water or liquid detergent - bubbles will form where the gas is leaking.



## THE MOST IMPORTANT ADVICE IS

- Teach your children to stay away from electrical appliances, fires and paraffin
- Never mix water and electricity
- Learn how to use first aid



## LIVING SAFELY WITH PARAFFIN



Keep paraffin far out of the reach of children. If a child drinks paraffin, even just a little bit, paraffin fumes can go into the lungs and cause a kind of pneumonia and even death.

- Do not store paraffin in cooldrink bottles, or any other bottles from which a child might want to drink.
- Switch the stove off when refilling.
- Never mix paraffin with methylated spirits - your stove could explode.
- Use a child-proof safety cap on paraffin bottles. You can get them from many spaza shops, or from the Paraffin Safety Association. Call them at 021 424 3473.

### What to do if your child drinks paraffin

- Keep the person upright and get help immediately.
- Do not try to make the child vomit.
- Do not give the child anything to drink.
- Take the child to the clinic as soon as possible.

## LIVING SAFELY WITH COAL AND WOOD FIRES



Try and use other more suitable ways of heating or cooking. Besides the danger of burns, smoke from wood and coal fires can cause serious lung problems.

- Make sure you have a chimney, or that the room is well ventilated.
- Buy low-smoke coal.



- Never light an *mbawula* (brazier) inside.
- Make an upside down fire by putting coal at the bottom and paper and wood on top. The fire will burn down to the coal, and be less smoky.

### How to prevent fires at home



- Place paraffin stoves, lamps and candleholders on flat surfaces where they cannot be knocked over.
- Do not leave a stove, fire, lamp or candle unattended while it is in use.
- Curtains, tablecloths and drying washing must be kept away from flames and hot appliances.
- Try to build houses with enough space between them so that fire cannot jump easily from one house to the next house. Make sure that windows are not opposite each other.
- A flame stove will work better if it is kept clean. The top of the wick should be kept straight by cutting it.
- Set up a fire committee with the municipality, fire brigade, and residents in your area.



### What to do if there is a fire in your home



- Fire cannot burn without air, fuel and heat. If you remove any one of these from the fire you will starve it, and the fire will die. For example, if oil in a pot catches alight, put the lid on. This will cut off the air supply and the fire will go out.
- Keep a bucket of sand nearby in case of fire.
- Never pour water on burning paraffin or oil. This can spread the fire as paraffin and oil float on water.
- If your clothes are on fire, STOP, DROP, and ROLL OVER to suffocate the flames. Do not run - the wind will make the clothes burn more.



### How to treat a burn

- Keep the burn in cold water for ten minutes. Do not put anything else on the burn. Toothpaste, butter or oil will make the burn worse.
- If the burn is bigger than the size of an adult's thumbprint, take the victim to the clinic immediately for help.



### ALSO SEE OTHER PAMPHLETS ABOUT:

- Improving energy use in your home
- Planting trees and vegetable gardens
- Preventing cracks and damp in your house



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