**Kitchen Safety Policy**

More than half of all accidental house fires start in the kitchen. Government statistics show that the largest number of accidental reported fires caused by electricity in the home is due to people misusing electrical cooking appliances, including microwaves.

So it's important that you take special care when using electrical appliances. The mixture of water, hot surfaces, flexible cables and electricity can be very dangerous. Follow our tips to stay safe.

**Sockets and switches**

To avoid water coming into contact with electricity, make sure that your sockets or switches are fitted at a safe distance (at least 30cm horizontally) from the sink
If appliances such as fridges, dishwashers and washing machines are fitted under worktops, getting to sockets may be difficult. Ideally, these appliances should be controlled by a switched fuse connection unit mounted above the worktop where you can reach it easily.

If a socket in the kitchen, or anywhere else is likely to be used to supply portable equipment outdoors, it should be protected by an [**RCD**](http://www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk/guides-and-advice/electrical-items/rcds-explained/).
Never use switches or any electrical equipment when your hands are wet

**Simple tips for kitchen safety**

* Don’t leave electrical appliances like dishwashers or washing machines running unattended
* Don’t wrap flexible cables around any equipment when it is still warm
* Check that flexible leads and appliances such as kettles and toasters are in good condition
* Don’t try to repair an appliance when it is still plugged in
* Never try to get toast that is stuck out of a toaster while it is plugged in, and especially not with a metal knife as there are often live parts inside
* Make sure you thoroughly clean your oven and grill– a build up of fat and grease is a major cause of fires
* Check your plug sockets are not overloaded with too many electrical appliances as this can lead to overheating
* Avoid storing objects on top of appliances like the microwave, which can block ventilation
* Defrost your fridge and freezer at least once a year to ensure these appliances continue to work properly
* Make sure you have a working smoke detector in case something does go wrong