

South Wales
Fire and Rescue Service



Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
De Cymru

HOME FIRE SAFETY CHECKS BY SMS!

The three fire and rescue services in Wales are committed to reaching out and communicating with everyone in their communities. An innovative example of this commitment is the recent introduction of a mobile phone based SMS Text service.

In recent years the public have been able to apply for a Free HFSC by calling a FREEPHONE telephone number or by registering on a fire service website. However as part of the Wales Fire and Rescue Services' ambitions to build safer communities and engage with a broader section of people in Wales, the SMS text service has just been launched. This has been a collaborative venture between North, South and the Mid and West Wales services made possible with funding from the Welsh Assembly Government.

All members of the public can now book a free Home Fire Safety Check by simply sending an SMS text message starting with HFSC and followed by their name to the short-code number **88365**.

It is hoped that this new facility will encourage even more people to apply for a Home Fire Safety Check helping to reduce the numbers of domestic fires and it should be of particular benefit to those who are deaf, hard of hearing or speech impaired.

SO HOW DOES IT WORK?

SMS stands for the short message service which is supported by all of the mobile telephone networks. It enables one mobile user to send a text message to another but can also be used for commercial and public sector activities too. SMS based competitions often appear on the TV and many local authorities now use SMS for reporting defective street lighting and other community matters.

In this instance the SMS message will be converted into an email and sent to the relevant community safety team at either of the three fire and rescue services dependant on where the 'caller' was at the time they sent their SMS message. An automated SMS Text receipt will then be immediately sent back to the caller's mobile phone confirming a message has been forwarded to a community safety team and advising them that they will be contacted within the next three working days in order to agree the details of the HFSC visit from a community safety representative.

SMS requests from callers will adopt the following simple steps:

- Texts to start with - **HFSC** -
- Followed with - **Caller Name** -
- And add - **Text** - but only for callers who are deaf or speech impaired.

SMS text then sent to **88365** (The cost of these text messages is between 10p and 15p)

FOR THE HARD OF HEARING AND SPEECH IMPAIRED

This SMS text service should be of extra benefit for those in the community who are deaf, hard of hearing or speech impaired who previously may have had difficulty in communicating with the fire service. The Fire and Rescue Service recognises that SMS text messaging is popular amongst these groups and intends to exploit this facility in order to improve its contacts with them. An initial request for a fire safety check may therefore be augmented with additional help for those with specific needs.

IMPORTANT!

The HFSC text service specifically applies to the fire service home safety visits and should not be used to contact the fire and rescue service in times of emergency.