

Fire precautions in war time / issued from the Lord Privy Seal's Office.

Contributors

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No. 5

PUBLIC INFORMATION LEAFLET

**READ THIS CAREFULLY AND KEEP IT FOR
REFERENCE**

FIRE PRECAUTIONS IN WAR TIME

**ISSUED FROM
THE LORD PRIVY SEAL'S OFFICE
AUGUST 1939**

WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN IN WAR

It is probable that in an air attack on this country an enemy would make use of fire bombs. The object would be not only to destroy property but also to create panic.

A large number of these bombs might be dropped in a small space. A large proportion of them would fall in gardens, streets and open spaces where they would burn out without doing much damage. But in a built-up area some would fall on the roofs of houses. One of these houses might be YOURS.

HOME FIRE FIGHTERS.

However strong the Fire Brigade may be, an outbreak of many fires all close together and beginning at the same time would be more than it could successfully deal with *unless the householder himself and his family took the first steps in defending their home.*

In Civil Defence EVERYBODY has a part to play. This is specially true of fire-fighting. In every house there should be one or more people ready to tackle a fire bomb. So read what follows ; read it again and again, make the preparations which are advised and see that everyone in your house knows exactly what to do. Then you will be able to protect your own home and the homes of your neighbours. For once a fire gets out of control you cannot tell how fast it may spread. All large fires start as small ones.

THE FIRE BOMB

The ordinary fire bomb is not in the least like a high explosive bomb. It may weigh as little as two pounds or so. It may not explode at all, but will blaze up and may scatter burning material in all directions.

It will go through any ordinary house roof if dropped from sufficient height, but a small bomb will probably come to rest on the first boarded floor below the roof. Fires will therefore mostly break out in roof spaces, attics and upper storeys.

For a time after a bomb has blazed up it may be impossible to get near it, and all that can be done will be to keep the fire from spreading. But when the bomb has burnt for about a minute it should be possible to get near enough to get the bomb under control before it does further mischief.

HOW TO DEAL WITH A FIRE

There will be two things to deal with—the bomb itself and the fire or fires it has started. Each of these may have to be tackled in different ways, but the main thing is to prevent the fire from spreading.



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A fire started by a bomb is just like an ordinary fire, and water is the best means of putting it out. **ACT QUICKLY.** Every minute you lose makes your job more difficult.

HOW TO DEAL WITH A BOMB

If you throw water on a burning bomb there is danger of the bomb scattering burning fragments in all directions, and you may do more harm than good. If, however, the water can be applied in the form of a fine spray it will cause the bomb to burn away quickly and it will generally be possible to get it under control. For this purpose the stirrup handpump, with a special nozzle producing spray or jet (according to requirements), is the best appliance. At first, you should direct the water on and round the fire, rather than on the bomb. This will prevent the fire spreading and will also make it easier to approach the bomb.

If you have no stirrup handpump available, sand could be used to cover the bomb. This will not extinguish it, but you should be able to scoop up the remains of the bomb, drop them into a bucket containing about four inches of sand, and remove the bucket to a safe place.

If you find it difficult to enter the roof space or room because of the heat and smoke, crawl on the floor and keep your face as low as possible. The air will be cooler and much clearer near the floor, and you will be able to breathe easily and see where you are going in places where you could do neither if you were standing up.

Remember that, even if you cannot tackle the bomb itself but can prevent the spread of the fire, your object will have been achieved.

WHAT YOU SHOULD DO NOW

1. Clear your roof spaces and attics of any old "junk" that you have collected there. See that you have nothing there that will easily catch fire and nothing that would prevent you getting at the burning bomb.

2. Make sure that you can easily get into your attic or roof space.

3. Have ready at least four large buckets, a shovel or scoop, preferably with a long handle, and a fair quantity of sand or dry earth. Provide also what appliances you can; if possible, a stirrup handpump with the special nozzle giving either a jet of water for playing on a fire, or spray for dealing with the bomb itself. Failing this, a garden syringe would be useful, or even old blankets soaked in water.

4. MAKE SURE YOU KNOW THE EMERGENCY FIRE BRIGADE ARRANGEMENTS IN YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD so that you can send for help if you want it. Your air raid warden or a member of the Fire Brigade or the Auxiliary Fire Service will give you all the information you want.

IF THERE SHOULD BE A THREAT OF WAR ACT AT ONCE AS FOLLOWS :

1. Fill at least two large buckets with water and *see that they are kept filled*. During an air raid you cannot rely on getting water from the domestic taps, because all the supply may be needed by the fire brigade. Have a bath or tank also kept full of water to refill the buckets in case of need. Put the buckets and other appliances, if you have any, on or near the top floor.

2. Have two more buckets half filled with sand—one to use in controlling the bomb and the other for putting the bomb into when you have scooped it up.

3. Tell the members of your household what they must do and see that they understand their duties. While one person might be able to deal with the situation if it is tackled promptly, two or even three would be better. If a handpump has been provided and three people are available, one should tackle the fire, another should pump, while the third should bring up supplies of water.

4. In a small house the sound of a bomb striking the roof would give adequate warning anywhere. In a large house it may be necessary to have a watcher on or near the top floor. He should if possible have a whistle to summon help. See that all doors which need not be open are kept shut. If the fire cannot be quickly got under, someone must call a fire patrol or report to the air raid warden or a policeman, according to the local fire brigade arrangements.

IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO GIVE FIXED RULES TO MEET ALL CASES OF FIRE CAUSED BY BOMBS. BUT STUDY THE ADVICE GIVEN ABOVE, DECIDE WHAT YOU WOULD DO AND PRACTISE IT UNTIL EVERYONE IN YOUR HOUSE KNOWS THE PART HE OR SHE HAS TO PLAY. THEN YOU WILL BE PREPARED TO FACE THE SITUATION CALMLY AND WITH CONFIDENCE.