

Stay fire safe when using emollients

If you use these products on yourself, your child or someone you care for, it is important to think about the increased fire risk through flammable clothing and bedsheets.

Make sure you:

- Wash clothing belonging to the person who uses emollients separately to other people's clothing, to avoid other items becoming contaminated.
- Do not sit too close to open fires or heaters.
- Loose clothing can easily catch fire - take care not to lean over a hot hot and roll up your sleeves if possible when cooking.
- Avoid naked flames such as candles, smoking materials (cigarettes, lighters etc).
- Ensure you have working smoke alarms on each level of your home and they are tested at least once a month.

Home Safety Visit

Do you know someone who may be vulnerable to the risk of fire?

The fire service is here to help.

We provide free fire safety advice over the phone or in your home.

During a home safety visit, a friendly fire safety adviser from Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service will come into your home to chat about what you can do to keep safe from fire. They can also provide free specialist equipment.

Get in touch to book a visit or for fire safety advice:

0800 05 02 999

dsfire.gov.uk/homesafety

firekills@dsfire.gov.uk

To request any information in this document in an alternative format or language please call 0800 05 02 999 or email firekills@dsfire.gov.uk



**DEVON &
SOMERSET**
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

Fire safety risks from moisturising creams (emollients)



Emollients. What are they?

Products such as creams, ointments, sprays, body wash and moisturisers are used by millions of people every day to manage dry skin conditions such as eczema and psoriasis. These products are called emollients.

Are emollients fire safe?

Emollients are very safe when used correctly, however, they may contain paraffin or other ingredients such as shea or cocoa butter, beeswax, lanolin, nut oil or mineral oils which can leave a flammable residue when absorbed into fabrics.

There have been 56 deaths confirmed as involving emollient creams in England since 2010. The risk is low but has devastating and fatal consequences.

When absorbed into fabric, all emollient creams can pose a fire risk when exposed to naked flames or other heat sources.

Why are emollients a fire hazard?

Some skin products can leave a flammable residue when they are absorbed into fabrics such as bedsheets and clothing. This flammable residue is not removed by washing at any temperature, so even freshly laundered items can still be a risk when near to any heat source. It is also possible that if contaminated items

are washed with other clothing, these items can also become flammable with residue. Therefore, we advise you to wash them separately so that clothing belonging to other members of the household does not also become contaminated.

If you are concerned about a skin care product, speak to a healthcare professional.

Understanding the fire risk of emollient skin creams

- Emollients are **not** flammable in their raw state
- Emollients are **not** flammable on the skin
- Emollients act as an accelerant (when emollient residue absorbed into fabric) is ignited, increasing the speed of ignition and intensity of a fire.

