



Norfolk Fire
and Rescue Service

Protection from fire and prevention of future deaths

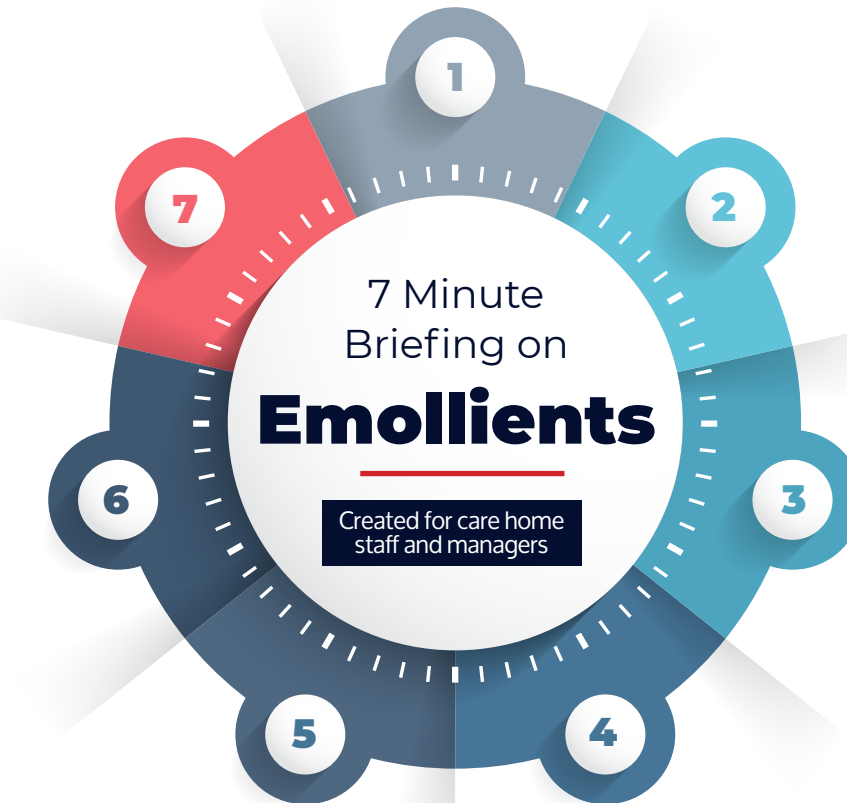
Following several tragic deaths of residents in care homes in the UK and Norfolk, the Coroner has made recommendations regarding the necessary levels of fire safety within care facilities. Are these deaths avoidable? – Yes. The issues need urgent consideration and action by care home Registered Managers, nominated individuals and care teams, to identify critical risks associated with individuals. The Fire Safety Order (2005) requires the person in charge of a building to identify and reduce fire risks for anyone who might be at risk, including those with mobility, vision and/or hearing impairments, or those who use emollients. Measures may include ensuring clear escape routes and providing non-flammable emollients, fire-retardant clothing, or bedding as part of a fire safety risk assessment for the building.

Consider

Consider – Is the individual a smoker? Are emollients being applied? Does this product contain paraffin? If Yes? Share the risks with: Individuals GP/ Nurse Prescriber / Family member. Consider an alternative product. Review the smoking policy for the property.

Increased Risk of Fire

This increased risk of fire posed by smoking whilst using emollient creams is so significant, we recommend actions to be taken to mitigate against it. Fire retardant covers, bedding or clothing for smokers is recommended. There must be sufficient numbers and items to be laundered at the correct high temperature, noting that this doesn't entirely remove the risk. This is the responsibility of the care home owing a duty of care for the health, safety and wellbeing of individuals who may be at heightened risk.



Personal Risk Assessment

A personal risk assessment for each resident is critical for their own safety and that of other residents and staff. This will assess the needs of the individual in conjunction with care workers and family and consider their habits, physical and mental capacity, and their environment. The risk assessment should be recorded and considered as part of their care plan, other assessments, and personal evacuation plans, and kept under review.

Coroner's Advice

Coroner's advice is that you should consider the risk posed by individuals smoking on your premises, particularly if the person at risk has limited mobility. This follows inquests into the deaths of high-risk smokers with mobility problems from burn injuries as a result of matches or cigarettes dropping on to clothing or bedding.

Increased risk factors

The use of such creams should be risk assessed and action taken to reduce the harm. We recommend the use of emollient creams be considered in your fire risk assessment to ensure that all reasonably practicable steps are taken to reduce the risk of a fire and its likelihood of occurring. Safety information videos - [Emollient safety | If you smoke and use emollients, you could be putting yourself at risk. It's important to keep away from fire, flames and cigarettes when using... | By Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Integrated Care System | Facebook](#) [Safe use of emollient skin creams to treat dry skin conditions - YouTube](#)

Emollient Creams

Emollient creams are used to treat dry skin conditions and some patients are often in bed for lengthy periods due to illness or impaired mobility. Certain creams can be highly flammable (e.g. those that are paraffin-based) and pose a significant risk in the event of a fire. The fire risk posed by the use of such emollient creams is significantly increased when the user is smoking. The individual's bedding and clothing can also become impregnated with cream, increasing flammability and the risk to the user.