



General safety information

There are very few hazards likely to be experienced in Serenity or the immediate locality. We are a long way out of the cities, the locals are friendly and any wild animals here are generally smaller than you and probably much more frightened of you than you are of them. However, just in case, please have a look through this information on the off chance that you might need it.

General fire safety

All of the furniture, materials and fittings in Serenity are chosen to be as non-flammable as possible. If by some chance however, you find a fire in the house, please follow the procedures noted below. People are more important than places so only take action against the fire if it is safe to do so.

There is a **log-burning stove** available for guests' use. It can generate an enormous amount of heat especially with the oak logs we supply. Please make sure that there is no flammable material near the stove when in use. In addition, please ensure that it is completely enclosed with no fallen embers or spare fuel near it if you use it before going to bed. Do not put extra wood on it before retiring as this can create a lot of flammable tars and smoke that can ignite suddenly.

The **barbeque** on the upper terrace is available for use by guests and there is charcoal and a supply of firelighters nearby. Again, please make sure that the fire is safely out before retiring and also that there are no flammable items nearby if it is left unattended. And no children!

Serenity house is a **no smoking** area but you are **welcome to smoke outside** the house in the gardens. In the summer, the vegetation gets extremely dry and so it is important to make sure that any discarded smoking materials are definitely extinguished after use. There have been several cases of large fires starting from a cigarette end and it would be a shame to have one here. In winter the fire risk is far less but please **pick up cigarette ends** anyway just to be tidy.

There is a **fire blanket** in the kitchen on the end of the wall cabinets furthest from the hob. In addition, there is a **dry powder extinguisher** and a large **CO2 extinguisher** under the counter by the door inside the utility room. Outside the house there are 2 **pressurised water extinguishers** under the terrace outside the front door.

There are 3 radio linked **smoke and heat detectors** installed in the house. If any one of them detects smoke or an unusual rate of rise of temperature they will all alarm. These are tested just before the arrival of every group of guests and the test result is logged.

If there is any incident of fire in the house or surrounding area, however trivial, please let the housekeeper know as soon as possible. For anything nontrivial, please call us immediately after calling for help, either neighbours or the fire brigade.

Injuries

In the lower cupboard in the utility room is a **small selection of first aid items** including Paracetamol, Ibuprofen, plasters, antiseptic cream, diarrhoea tablets and some small dressings. There is also a comprehensive **sealed first aid kit** for emergency use only by a knowledgeable first aider. Please do not break the seal on this if you just need a plaster as the contents need to be kept sterile.

If any injury occurs which is more than trivial, that is, it requires a visit to a doctor or to hospital, you must **let us know** as soon as possible. Apart from our obvious concern about the welfare of our guests we need to inform our insurance company and our letting agents so that they can deal with any inquiries from other guests. And, of course, so that we can see if we can prevent further occurrences of the incident.

Wildlife, lizards and other countryside inhabitants

Whilst deer, wild boar, hedgehogs, marmots and various mice have been seen here, they are generally very shy and retiring and will run away very rapidly if they see you. The only real exception are the wild boar when the mothers are with their young. Not surprisingly, they feel very protective of their youngsters and will defend them strenuously. On the other hand, the female boars produce their young (which are called humbugs in the UK) and rear them initially very deep in the heart of the forests and the possibility of meeting them around the house is vanishingly small. There are snakes in Southern France but they don't seem to live near here and I have yet to see one. The lizards which are everywhere on sunny days are completely harmless. If you are lucky, you may see our giant green and blue lizard - about 12 inches long - which lives near the top of the garden with his entourage of somewhat dowdier female companions.

Mosquitos and flies

At some periods of the year there seem to be lots of flies in evidence. These are a bit of a pain especially around the pool as they seem to delight in mass suicide in the water and the filters can't keep up with them. This only seems to last for a few days however and then the level goes back to being controllable. The mosquitos are always around, especially just at dusk and can cause small children, and susceptible adults a lot of irritating bites if they are unprotected. Keep the house windows closed in the afternoon and evening, make sure that you have insect repellent liberally applied if you are outside at dusk or later and give your bedroom a quick blast of insect killer 20 minutes before you go to bed. My experience is that the citronella based repellents and all the other organic remedies really don't work but I'd be delighted to know if you have one that works

Bees, wasps and hornets

Most of the things that buzz in the garden are intent on finding the next flower to settle on and, unless you annoy them severely, they will leave you alone. There are huge bees that cruise around the garden and they are just fun to watch . . . from a distance. However we do have the occasional hornet both European and Asian and these, as in the UK, are a slightly different matter as they have a somewhat painful sting. If you see them in the house, do not hesitate to give them a long squirt with the insect killer aerosols. Outside the house it is better to just let them go away without making a fuss. If you see anything that looks like a nest anywhere, not just on the Serenity site, please let us know as the French government wants to map their locations over the country - and then kill them.