

HOME FIRE SAFETY CHECKLIST

Fact Sheet 10 – Community Risk Management

- NSW FIRE BRIGADES
- NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE
- ACT FIRE BRIGADE
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ARE YOU FIRE SAFE IN THE HOME?

The NSW Fire Brigades recommends this simple safety checklist to assist in keeping your home fire safe.

- Installing an adequate number of suitable smoke alarms and testing them regularly is the first step in your home fire safety plan.
- Having a written escape plan in case of fire and practicing it regularly is the second step.
- Make sure keys to all locked doors are readily accessible in case you need to escape.
- Never leave cooking or any other open flame including candles or oil burners unattended.
- Clean the lint filter of your clothes dryer each and every time you use it.
- Never smoke in bed and take extra care if consuming alcohol whilst smoking.
- In Winter take extra care when using heaters, electric blankets or open fires.
- Don't overload power points and switch off appliances when not in use.
- Always keep lighters and matches away from children and educate them that they are "tools not toys" to only be used by responsible adults.
- If you have a garage or shed remember to take extra care with any stored chemicals and fuels and always refuel mowers, edgers etc when they are cold and in the open.
- If you have a gas, electric or wood BBQ always check that it is in safe working order before lighting and that it is always in the care of a responsible adult when in use. (See Fact Sheet No.16 General Barbeque Safety).
- If you live in a bushfire prone area keep the ground around your home clear of leaves and other litter and remember to clean your gutters regularly.

**A collaboration of the NSW Fire Brigades, NSW Rural Fire Service,
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FIRE SAFETY TIPS

- Remember that smoke from a fire will make you confused and that you cannot see in smoke.
- When asleep you will not smell smoke and it will in fact put you into a deeper sleep.
- If you have escaped from a home fire, remember once you get out stay out and dial 000.
- Oil, gas or wood heating units may require a yearly maintenance check.
- Only ever use fuses of recommended rating and install an electrical safety switch.
- Home fire safety is important for the whole family and preparation can prevent a tragedy.

IN AN EMERGENCY CALL 000

DOMESTIC SMOKE ALARMS CHECKLIST

Fact Sheet 11 – Community Risk Management

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FACT

Smoke from a home fire is toxic, only early warning can assist in giving your family vital time to escape a smoke filled room. Also, when asleep you will not smell the smoke from a fire and the smoke will actually put you into a deeper sleep. A smoke alarm can provide the early warning you need and is the critical first step in your home fire safety plan.

WHAT ARE THE TYPES OF DOMESTIC SMOKE ALARMS AVAILABLE?

There are hard wired (connected to mains power with a battery back-up) or battery powered smoke alarms available. There are models available for use in kitchens and caravans and for those with special needs such as the hearing impaired. Models incorporating an emergency light are also available.

Whatever type you choose to use we recommend that:

- Every house or home unit has a suitable number of working smoke alarms installed.
- There should be smoke alarms on every level of your home.
- Only Australian Standards # 3786 approved alarms should be used.
- Hard wired alarms must be fitted by a qualified electrician.
- Smoke alarms must be installed according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- All smoke alarms should be tested regularly and at least monthly.
- You should replace the battery in each smoke alarm at least once a year.
- Alarms should be replaced as recommended because they have a limited lifespan.
- To be effective smoke alarms must be cleaned regularly.
- Interconnected alarms which will activate at the same time should be considered if you have children.

What else should you do to make your home fire safe?

- You need to have a plan which covers what to do when the smoke alarm goes off and warns you of a fire.
- Your household should prepare a written escape plan and practise it regularly.
- Heavy sleepers such as children or those affected by alcohol or drugs may not be woken by the sound of the alarm. Make sure this contingency is covered in your home escape plan.

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SMOKE ALARM SAFETY TIPS

- Remember that smoke from a fire will make you confused and that you cannot see in smoke
- If you have escaped from a home fire, remember once you get out stay out and dial 000
- Let your children master fire escape planning and practice before holding a fire escape drill
- If a family member has hearing or mobility problems ensure that these are taken into account and if necessary that someone is assigned to help them escape
- Home fire safety is important for the whole family and preparation can prevent tragedy.

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HOME FIRE ESCAPE PLAN

Fact Sheet 12 – Community Risk Management

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FACT

Of the 21 accidental, home deaths that have occurred in NSW that have been investigated since the start of 2001, the NSW Fire Brigades Fire Investigation and Research Unit have revealed that 13 of the victims would have been much more likely to survive if they had had an evacuation plan to help them get out of their homes faster.

HOME FIRE ESCAPE PLAN CHECKLIST

Every home and workplace should have a fire escape plan. Accidental home fires by their very nature can catch people unawares. Without an escape plan you are placing your life and your families' lives in jeopardy. For a safer home regularly practice the following escape tips:

- Know two safe ways out of every room.
- Draw your escape plan on paper and discuss your escape plan with your family.
- As you escape make sure you close internal doors behind you.
- Decide on a safe outside meeting place eg. Near the letterbox.
- Make sure that your windows and doors can quickly open if and when required.
- Install smoke alarms: test them regularly and change the batteries at least every year.
- Smoke alarms can alert you to a fire, an escape plan can then help get you out alive.
- Practise your escape plan regularly with all your family members / householders.
- If there is a fire in your home, do not wait, EVERY SECOND COUNTS, escape immediately and then call 000 from a neighbours home.
- Once you get out, STAY OUT, never go back inside a burning building.
- Remember to consider the special needs of children, the elderly or the disabled when developing your escape plan.

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FIRE SAFETY TIPS

- Remember that smoke from a fire will make you confused and that you cannot see in smoke.
- When asleep you will not smell smoke and it will in fact put you into a deeper sleep.
- Oil, gas or wood heating units may require a yearly maintenance check.
- Only ever use fuses of the recommended rating and install an electrical safety switch.
- Home fire safety is important for the whole family and preparation can prevent a tragedy.

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WINTER FIRE SAFETY - CHECKLIST

Fact Sheet 13 – Community Risk Management

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FACT

The NSWFB attended 4425 residential fires in NSW during 2004 with 1292, or 29% of them, occurring in the winter months.

IS YOUR HOME WINTER FIRE SAFE?

We recommend this simple safety checklist to help keep homes fire safe this winter. Make sure you and everyone in your household follows the following safety advice:

- Most importantly, have an adequate number of suitable smoke alarms installed throughout your home and make sure that you test them regularly.
- Make sure you and all your family know two safe ways out of every room in your home.
- Have a written home escape plan in case of fire and practice it regularly.
- Never ever leave cooking unattended.
- If you have a fireplace in your home make sure the chimney is clean.
- If you have a fireplace always place a screen in front of it when in use.
- Check electric blankets for damage or frayed cords before placing on the bed.
- Take care to keep curtains, tablecloths and bedding away from portable heaters.
- Keep wet clothing at least 1 metre from heaters or fireplaces and never leave unattended.
- If you use a clothes dryer make sure you clean the lint filter each and every time you use it.
- Only use one appliance per power point and switch off when not in use.
- Always extinguish candles or any other open flames before going to bed.
- Always handle candles or any other open flame with care.
- Store matches or lighters in a secure place not accessible to young children.

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WINTER FIRE SAFETY TIPS

- To test an electric blanket lay it flat on top of the bed, then switch it on for five minutes before putting it on the bed for use to confirm it is okay.
- Use only authorised installers of fixed heating appliances.
- Oil, gas or wood heating units may require a yearly maintenance check.
- Only use fuses of recommended rating and install an electrical safety switch.
- If possible, in the kitchen keep a fire extinguisher and fire blanket placed near the exit.
- Never leave burning candles or any open flame unattended.

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CHILDREN AND FIRE FASCINATION

Fact Sheet 15 – Community Risk Management

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Does your child have a FASCINATION with fire?

Many children, and in particular boys, may develop an interest in fire or playing with lighters or matches at some stage.

It is accepted by health professionals that an interest in fire by children is quite normal but care is necessary to ensure that your child doesn't get burnt or damage anything as a result of this curiosity.

There are various reasons why children start fires, some of these reasons include:

- Curiosity and fascination is accepted as part of common behavioural learning.
- Some children may start fires as part of individual attention seeking.
- Peer pressure from other children can be an influence that causes firelighting.
- Unfortunately some children who are hurting through anger or revenge may light fires.
- There is for some children an element of malicious mischief that includes firesetting.
- Health professionals advise that a small percentage of children have an unhealthy fire fascination that will require professional health treatment.

Children are often unaware that a tiny flame can grow into a dangerous fire.

What can you do to help prevent your child developing a fire fascination?

- Install smoke alarms and with the family test them regularly and change the batteries annually.
- Involve your children in developing a home escape plan and practise it together regularly.
- Always store matches or lighters securely. Children will climb to access them.
- Teach your children that fire is not a TOY but is a useful TOOL for cooking or heating when used safely and responsibly by adults.
- Don't ask children to get matches or lighters for you. Children learn by example and often mimic adult behaviour.
- Encourage young children to bring any matches or lighters that they find to you and praise them for acting responsibly.
- Do not ignore evidence of fireplay such as burns on clothes or matches or lighters in pockets.
- Ensure that your children are supervised at all times.

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FIRE FASCINATION SAFETY TIPS

- Teach older children how to use matches and fire safely, and stress to them the importance of only lighting fires in the presence of adults.
- Be aware that younger children may play with fire in their bedroom.
- When asleep you will not smell smoke and it will in fact put you into a deeper sleep.

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SMALL BUSINESS FIRE SAFETY - CHECKLIST

Fact Sheet 20 – Community Risk Management

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- NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE
- ACT FIRE BRIGADE
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FACT

Small businesses need to have plans to prevent fires and to help their business recover should an unforeseen emergency occur.

IS YOUR SMALL BUSINESS FIRE SAFE?

The Fire Services recommend this simple safety checklist to assist your small business prevent damage that could be caused by fire:

- Teach your staff about workplace fire prevention and safety.
- Avoid storing or stockpiling flammable materials such as packaging materials or waste where they could be accessed by the public, including areas immediately outside your business premises.
- Make sure all machinery is serviced as recommended by manufacturers and is kept clean. If possible, switch machinery off when the business is unattended.
- Secure all doors, windows or other access points when the business is unattended, and make sure your business has adequate lighting to deter trespassers.
- Ensure your business has an adequately serviced and functional fire alarm system that is suitable to your small business, eg: remote serviced alarm systems, sprinkler systems, thermal or smoke alarms etc.
- If your business stores dangerous goods, ensure their storage and use adheres to legislative requirements.
- Make sure your business has a written and practised fire escape plan that includes full staff lists and designated meeting points.

We recommend this simple safety checklist to assist your small business to reduce damage caused from fire and to assist in a speedy business recovery.

- Ensure that all of your staff has sufficient training in what they do if your small business is exposed to an unexpected fire. Depending on your business, this will at least mean knowing where to escape to and dialling '000'.
- Make sure you know what information is important for your business continuity. This should include having contingency plans to protect and/or restore all important information (hard copy & IT) like supplier and client lists, business contracts and insurance details.
- Consider having an off-site secure location to store important information in your contingency plan.

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SMALL BUSINESS FIRE SAFETY TIPS

- Remember that smoke from a fire will make you confused and that you cannot see in smoke.
- Always ensure your business has sufficient fire insurances.
- If you feel your staff require Commercial Fire Safety Training contact a commercial training provider or Comsafe on (02) 9318 4824.

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SENIORS FIRE SAFETY - CHECKLIST

Fact Sheet 21 – Community Risk Management

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- NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE
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- ACT RURAL FIRE SERVICE



FACT

Being physically impaired or frail due to advanced age can significantly affect your ability to survive if unfortunate enough to be caught in a home fire.

ARE YOU FIRE SAFE?

We recommend a simple safety checklist to help keep seniors fire safe:

- Have an adequate number of approved (AS3786) smoke alarms installed and test them regularly.
- Don't fight the fire – get out and stay out and dial '000' immediately.
- Where possible know two safe and clear ways out of every room in your home.
- Leave a key in the deadlock while at home providing it cannot be seen from the outside (if the lock is visible from the outside, locate the key in a secure place nearby) to enable a quick exit.
- Have an escape plan that all occupants understand in case of fire and practice it regularly.
- Leaving cooking unattended can result in a fire. Switch off all cooking, including microwave ovens, before leaving the kitchen even to answer the phone or doorbell.
- Smoking in bed is dangerous, NEVER EVER SMOKE IN BED.
- Have an approved electrical safety switch (residual current device) installed.
- Be careful of loose fitting garments near heaters and cooking appliances.
- Make sure fans, heaters and their cords are not a trip hazard and are away from curtains, tablecloths and bedding, consider the use of wall mounted fans and heaters instead.
- Don't overload power points and switch off when not in use.
- Refer to Fact Sheets 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14 for additional fire safety information.

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SENIORS FIRE SAFETY TIPS

- If you need assistance with the installation of smoke alarms or smoke alarm batteries, contact your local NSW or ACT Fire Brigade Station.
- Always use a qualified electrician to install or check wiring or appliances.
- Only use fuses of recommended rating and install an electrical safety switch.

IN AN EMERGENCY CALL 000

CALL TRIPLE ZERO (000) TO REPORT

Fact Sheet 29 – Community Risk Management

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- ACT FIRE BRIGADE
- ACT RURAL FIRE SERVICE



FACTS: Knowing how to call Triple Zero (000) for a fire emergency can be the difference between life and death, or a building or other property being saved or destroyed.

The triple zero (000) service is the quickest way to get the right resources from emergency services to help you and should be used to contact Police, Fire or Ambulance services in life threatening or time critical situations.

Calls to triple zero (000) are free and can be made from mobile phones, home or work phones or payphones.

The simple steps in making a Triple Zero (000) call to report a fire:

- Stay calm and call Triple Zero (000) from a safe location.
- A Telstra operator will ask you if you need Police, Fire or Ambulance. Say “Fire”. If you are calling using a mobile or satellite phone the operator will ask you for other location information.
- You will then be connected to an emergency service operator, who will take details of the situation.
- Stay on the line, speak clearly and answer the operator’s questions.
- Give them the details of where you are, including street number, name, nearest cross street, and locality. In rural areas it is important to give the full address and distances from landmarks and roads, not just the name of the property.
- Don’t hang up until the operator has all the information they need.
- If possible wait outside at a prearranged meeting point or in a prominent location for fire services to arrive to assist them to locate the fire.
- If you make a triple zero (000) call whilst travelling on a Motorway or on a rural road, know the direction you are travelling and the last exit or town you passed through to assist services to correctly locate the incident.

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ADDITIONAL TIPS

Other things everyone should know in an emergency

- If a person is unable to speak English, if they call Triple Zero (000), say “fire” and leave the phone off the hook the call will be recorded and traced and a fire engine will be sent to that address.
- Record the Triple Zero (000) emergency number beside the telephone at home and work.
- Take time to teach children and overseas visitors how to make an emergency call.
- Callers with hearing or speech impairments can call the one zero six (106) text-based emergency call service using a textphone.

IN AN EMERGENCY CALL 000