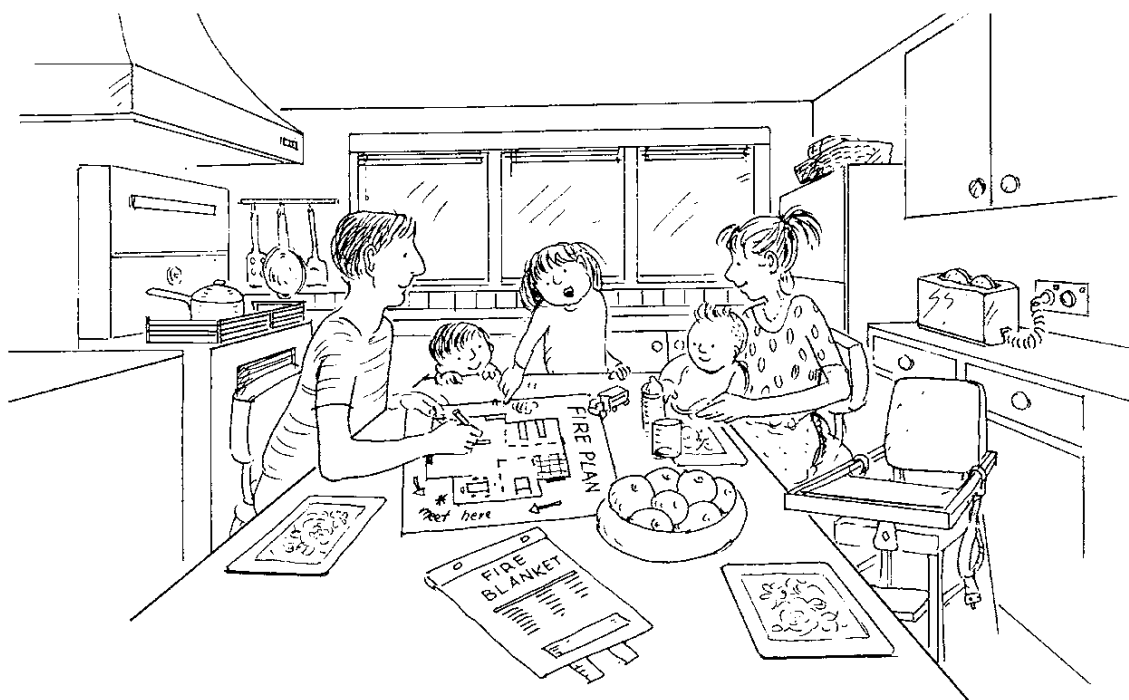


Fire safety in the home



In Australia each year many children are injured due to fire in the home. Children can die or be scarred for life as a result of burn injuries. Even if no one is hurt, the emotional cost of losing a home with cherished possessions and memories is great.

Because our homes are familiar places to us, we may become complacent and careless. We may not see the hazards, but they are there.

Key messages for parents

Smoke alarms

Home owners are now legally required to install at least one smoke alarm on every level of their home. Where a home is rented, it is the owner's responsibility to make sure that working smoke alarms are installed.

There are two types of smoke alarms, photo-electric and ionisation. Photo-electric

alarms are very effective at detecting slow burning, smouldering fires. They are suitable for most locations including near kitchens and in caravans. They are less prone to false alarms from cooking.

Ionisation alarms are more effective at detecting the small smoke particles given off by fast burning, flaming fires. All Australian fire services now recommend buying a photo electric smoke alarm when installing a new alarm or replacing an existing alarm.

Don't remove an ionisation smoke alarm unless you replace it immediately with a photo-electric alarm. Any type of working smoke alarm is better for your safety than no smoke alarm at all.

To take care of your smoke alarms, follow these simple steps:

- **Weekly:** Test smoke alarms
- **Monthly:** Clean smoke alarms
- **Yearly:** Change the batteries (at the end of daylight saving – 'Change your clock

change your smoke alarm battery')

- **Every ten years:** Replace your smoke alarm.

Fire blankets and extinguishers

If you are not confident about using either a fire blanket or an extinguisher, the safest thing you can do is to close the door on the fire and get everyone out of the home. **Do not go back inside.** Then **ring the emergency services 000 and ask for the fire brigade** from a neighbour's phone or from a mobile phone.

Fire blankets are specially designed to extinguish small cooking fires. The fire is extinguished by smothering the flames, preventing oxygen reaching the fire. Water should never be used for oil, fat or electrical fires.

If you decide to use a fire blanket, remember to **lay** the blanket over the fire and not throw it over.

Household extinguishers are normally the type known as 'dry powder'. They are red with a white band. The can be used on most fires – wood, paper, cloth, flammable liquids, oils and electrical fires.

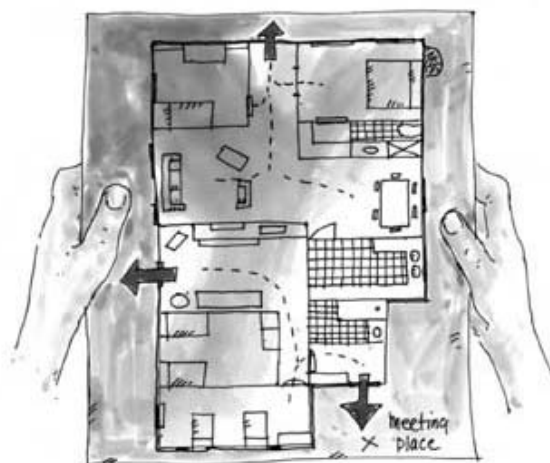
Fire blankets and extinguishers can be bought from most hardware stores and large supermarkets. MFB recommends that you buy only fire blankets and extinguishers with the Australian Standard Symbol.

If you use a fire blanket or extinguisher to extinguish the fire, phone the fire brigade on 000. They will check the roof space to make sure that no embers are left alight.

Planning in the event of a fire

A Home Escape Plan is essential for protection in case of a fire. Consider these points when developing your home escape plan:

- It is important to have two means of exit from each room.
- As you are leaving the room, close the door to prevent fire and smoke from spreading. When there is smoke, always crawl low to get under the smoke.
- The first priority is to get out of a burning home.



- Alert others in the home as you go.
- Phone **000** from the nearest available home.
- Be prepared to give an address, name and nearest crossroads.
- When outside, never go back inside the home.
- Arrange a meeting place at the front of the home where everyone knows to meet and wait for the fire brigade e.g. the letterbox.

If you live in a multistorey house:

- Make sure you have your smoke alarms in the correct position on both the ground and top floors and in your bedroom. (This should give you enough time to get out in the normal way).
- If you can't get out, close the door to your bedroom and put a blanket at the base of your door.
- Open the window and yell for help. Do not jump.
- If you have a phone with you, ring **000** and ask for the fire brigade.

Educational resources for parents and teachers

Fire safety tips

For more detailed information on the above issues, plus heaters and open fires, electrical appliances, cooking, smoking, candles and oil burners, contact the MFB and ask for a copy of their *Home Fire Safety* booklet.

Fire Ed

Is a Metropolitan Fire Brigade fire safety strategy for primary schools in the Metropolitan Fire Brigade area (Metropolitan Fire District). Specialised resource materials are provided for primary aged new arrivals who attend an English Language School or Centre. Fire Ed for special Ed has additional resource support to increase access for students with a disability.

Early Fire Safe

This program is delivered by fire-fighters to parents and caregivers of young children and early childhood professionals. The aim is to raise the awareness of preventing burns and scalds.

The Juvenile Fire Awareness and Intervention Program (JFAIP)

JFAIP is designed for children and young people who have been involved in inappropriate fire behaviour, playing with fire or setting fires. This program delivered by MFB and CFA, aims to reduce the number of deaths, injuries and the millions of dollars in property damage caused by juvenile fire lighting in Victoria. It is home based, free and strictly confidential.

T 1300 309 988.

SmokeBUster 2

SmokeBUster, an interactive mobile education unit has had more than 200,000 visitors from the time it was launched in 2000. Smoke-BUster 2 was launched in 2007 and offers visitors the opportunity of experiencing a fire as a fire-fighter sees it; from the alert at the fire station, responding to the information given about the address and then, on arrival viewing what the fire-fighters see inside a house where a fire has occurred.

Audio prompts and clever use of lighting guide visitors through each room and indicate when to move to the next room. Each room has a number of fire safety messages which are also highlighted by lights and audio prompts.

Note:

- The experience will take 7 minutes
- Children must be accompanied by an adult
- This experience is not recommended for children aged 6 and under
- The maximum number of people per session is 5.

Warning:

Please be aware that one of the rooms displays the aftermath of a fire. This may distress some visitors.

FLAMES for ELS/ELC

This program is designed to teach English through the teaching of fire safety. It is aimed at teenaged new arrivals who attend English Language School or Centres (ELS/ELC).

Please Note: MFB fire safety programs are accessible to people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Please contact the Community Education Department of the MFB for more information.

For further information contact:

Metropolitan Fire Brigade
Community Education Department

T (03) 9665 4464

W www.mfb.org.au

E commed@mfb.vic.gov.au

TTY 1300 727 301

If you would like to use an interpreter to ring us, dial 131 450 and say, 'MFB'.