

Ten Steps to Home Fire Safety

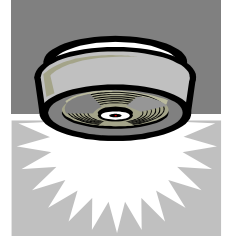
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Fire Protection Association Australia recommends ten steps you can take to help protect yourself, your family and your home from fire.

1. Smoke Alarms

Smoke Alarms are designed to alert you to the presence of a fire, especially when you are asleep. Make sure you have at least one installed and operating on each level of your home.

Smoke alarms have been responsible for saving many hundreds of lives in Australia and overseas. For advice on the selection, placement and maintenance of smoke alarms, contact your local fire brigade or a reputable fire protection company, or refer to FPA Australia Data Sheet titled "Fire Alarms". A number of Councils and service clubs offer assistance with installing smoke alarms and replacing batteries.

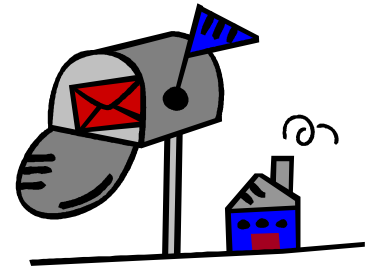


2. Getting Out

In the case of fire in your home you **MUST** leave the house. You must **NOT** return for pets or treasured possessions: they are not worth your life.

Call the fire brigade as soon as possible from a neighbour's house or public phone. If you live alone, go straight to a neighbour. Otherwise, everyone in your house should arrange to meet at a safe point away from the house (for example, the letter-box). This will make sure every occupant is accounted for.

You should plan now and practice escaping from your home by at least two routes from every room. If there is smoke in the house, crawl low. There will be less smoke and heat near the floor. For further information refer to FPA Australia Sheet titled "Fire Safety and Children"



3. Dead-Locks

Many people have died in fires because they have dead-locked themselves in and removed the key from the lock. Normal door-locks are designed to prevent people entering a house without a key. Deadlocks also allow doors to be locked to prevent people leaving a house without a key. It is fine to deadlock your doors while you are away and your home is unoccupied. It can be dangerous to deadlock your house while you are at home without having the key in the lock or close by. You must be able to quickly escape from your home in the event of fire (or in the event of an intruder).

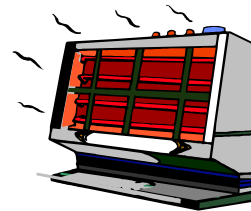
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4. Heaters

All heaters should be at least 1 metre (3 feet) away from curtains, furniture or flammable items. Clothing should never be placed over heaters.



5. Wood Fires

Wood and similar fuels should not be burned in anything other than a properly constructed fire-place, wood heater or wood-stove. Open fires should be screened with a proper fireguard and NEVER left unattended.

6. Cooking

When cooking you should make sure that there are no curtains or other flammable materials nearby. You should use only cooking pots with safe, strong handles and properly fitting lids.

If cooking oil catches fire DO NOT use water. Instead, turn off the heating source, place a lid on the pot, or use a fire blanket. Do not attempt to carry the pot of burning cooking oil to outside the house.

If you cannot immediately put out the fire you must evacuate your home and call the fire brigade.



7. Clothing

When cooking around open fire, wear close fitting clothes as loose sleeves and scarves can easily catch fire. If your clothing does catch fire do not panic:

STOP don't run as this will fan the flames

DROP to the ground and cover your face with your hands

ROLL over to smother the flames



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8. Smoking

If you or anyone else in your home smokes, make sure there are large ash-trays around the home.

Do not smoke in bed, or when you are drowsy. Dropped cigarettes are a major cause of fire fatalities.



9. Electricity

Have an electrician check your wiring and install a safety switch (earth leakage circuit breaker).

If you have old electrical appliances or appliances with worn or frayed cords, have them checked. If any appliance gives off smoke or a burning smell, switch it off immediately at the plug, and remove the plug from the socket.

If you have any doubts at all about an appliance, **DO NOT** use it until it is checked by a qualified tradesperson.

10. Be Prepared

Have an approved fire extinguisher and fire blanket handy, and keep your garden hose attached to an outside tap.



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Disclaimer: Please note that the information provided here is basic fire safety information and that if you have questions or concerns, please contact FPA Australia, your local fire service or other professional body for clarification or additional information.