

Fire Safety Data Sheet

Fire Safety and Children

Each year numerous children fall victim to fire. In some cases, children themselves cause fires which injure themselves and others and result in damage to homes, schools and other buildings, as well as bushland. Children need to be protected from fire, and from the potential for starting fires.

It is natural for children to be fascinated with fire, and to try and experiment. Be careful how you introduce children to fire. Try to ensure that they understand the damage fire can do.

Simple steps to help protect children from fire include:

Install Smoke Alarms

Smoke alarms have been responsible for saving hundreds of lives in Australia and around the world. They are cheap and easy to install. In some states they are now mandatory. If you do not have at least one smoke alarm in your home, buy one today. (for advice on selection, installation and maintenance see Fire Safety Data Sheet DS2 - Smoke Alarms.)

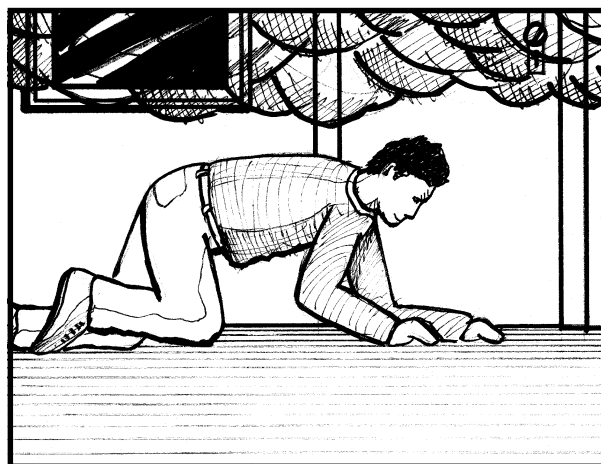
Make an Escape Plan

Escape Plans are essential for schools, pre-schools and for the home.

- Draw a plan of your home or building.
- Plan two ways out of every room, including bedrooms.
- Make special arrangements for children and the aged or disabled.
- Be sure that all locks can be unlocked quickly.
- If an escape path is from above the ground floor, make sure there is a safe way down.
- Choose a meeting place away from danger, preferably to the front of the property (a gate-post, letter-box or particular tree).
- Practice your escape plan at least twice per year, not by walking or running, but by crawling low to reach safety.
- Practice your escape plan, starting in the bedroom, then again from other rooms.
- Keep a copy of your escape plan in a prominent place (a notice board or fridge door).

Ensure that every-one knows what to do in the event of fire:

- Do not hesitate
- Follow the escape plan
- Crawl low under smoke
- Test each door using the back of your hand (if it is hot do not open it-use another escape path). Do not grab the door handle.
- Close all doors as you go. This will help to limit the spread of fire and smoke.
- If you are trapped stuff the cracks around doors to keep smoke out. Wait by the window and signal for help from there.
- Do not try to take possessions or pets. Just get out!
- Do not go back - No Matter What!
- Call the fire brigade from the nearest phone AWAY from the building on fire.



Keep matches and lighters out of reach

Do not leave matches or lighters on coffee tables. Be aware that children can climb, and that it is often not sufficient to keep these materials out of their reach from the floor.

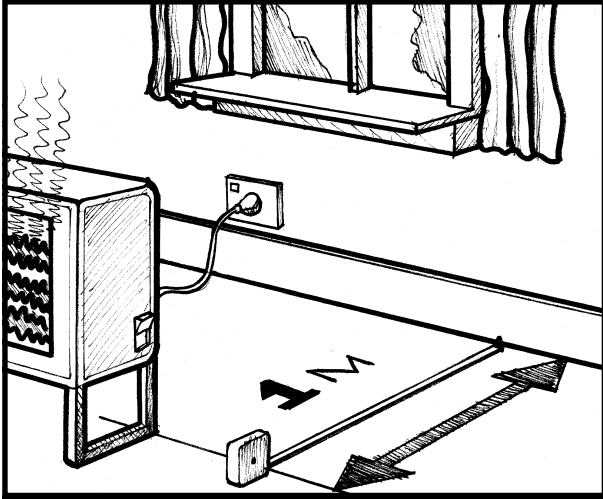
Safe Cooking

Do not allow children to use stoves or microwave ovens without supervision. Make sure that all pot handles are turned away from the front of a stove.

Fire Protection Association Australia
 PO Box 1049 Box Hill Victoria 3128 (acn 005 366 576)
 Tel: 03 9890 1544 Fax: 03 9890 1577 E-mail: fpaa@fpaa.com.au

Safe Heating

Keep children and anything else that can burn at least 1 metre (3 feet) away from heaters. Make sure there is a screen to every open fire and to any heater with a hot surface. Do not leave children unsupervised near an open fire.



Safe Electric Blankets

Store electric blankets carefully. Check thoroughly before use. Do not use with children prone to bed-wetting.

Do not Leave Hot Irons Unattended.

A dangling cord is attractive to a curious child. A falling iron can injure and an iron left face-down can start a fire.

Protect Electrical Appliances

Make sure that electrical appliances are safe and openings are out of reach of children. Use protective covers on unused power points.

Teach Children to Stop Drop and Roll

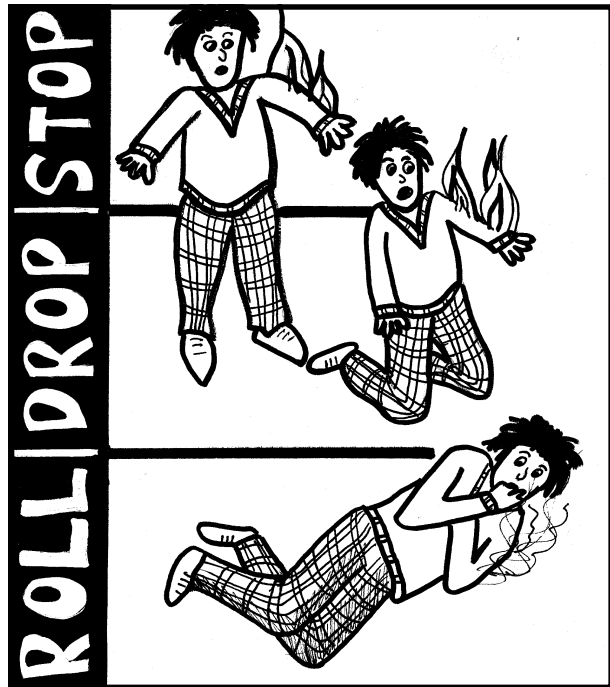
If clothing catches fire,

Stop - Do not run (this will fan the flames).

Drop to the ground,

Roll over to smother flames.

Cover your face with your hands.



Keep your Hot Water Cool

Adjust your hot water thermostat to below 50°C to prevent scalds. Teach children to always turn on the cold tap first.

Cool a Burn

If someone is burned, immediately place the wound in cool water for 5-10 minutes. Do not use butter or grease. These help to keep the heat in. If the burn blisters or chars, see a doctor.

Train your Child-minders

Make sure that all teachers and baby-sitters are familiar with these guide-lines and know your escape plan.

Seek Professional help for Persistent Fire-lighters

Despite the best efforts of parents and teachers, some children will persist in trying to light fires. Many Children's Hospitals and fire brigades have programs to help in such cases.

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