

Home Fire Safety



Tasmania Fire Service



Protect what you value



**Smoke
Alarms**



**Escape
Plan**



**Child
Safety**

**+
more**

Fire safety begins at home.

The advice in this booklet will help you learn how you can prevent house fires and keep you and your loved ones safe.

**Don't become a statistic.
Read this booklet!
It could save your life.**

A fire in your home can be devastating, even fatal. Once a fire starts it can spread rapidly, putting you and your loved ones at risk. While the dangers of fire are very real, there is a lot you can do to protect yourself, your family and your home.

The Tasmania Fire Service responds to more than 350 house fires each year. Tasmania has one of the highest fire fatality rates per person in Australia.

The Tasmania Fire Service is committed to keeping communities safe by sharing home fire safety strategies and information with Tasmanians.

The advice in this booklet will help you learn how you can prevent house fires and keep you and your loved ones safe. Making your home fire safe and knowing what to do in the event of a fire can be the difference between life and death.

**To find out more, go to
www.fire.tas.gov.au**



Fires are fast!



By now, smoke alarms should have detected the fire and alerted your family.



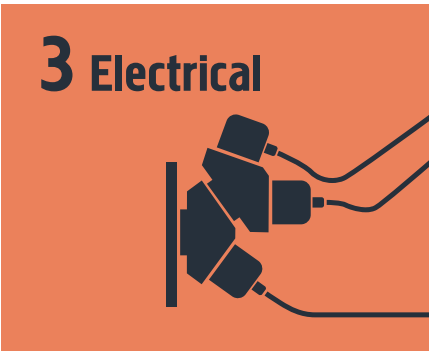
With no warning, the fire will take hold and grow quickly. Poisonous smoke will start to develop, which is often the deadliest part of a fire.



The fire has reached in excess of 800 degrees Celsius. All of the contents in the room will be on fire and it will have spread to other rooms in the house.

Where do home fires start?

Here are the top 4 most common causes of home fires:



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Smoke alarms









! Remember: only working smoke alarms save lives!

You are more likely to die in a house fire without a working smoke alarm, especially when sleeping. When you're asleep, you lose your sense of smell.

A working smoke alarm provides you with early warning of a fire and gives you time to escape safely.

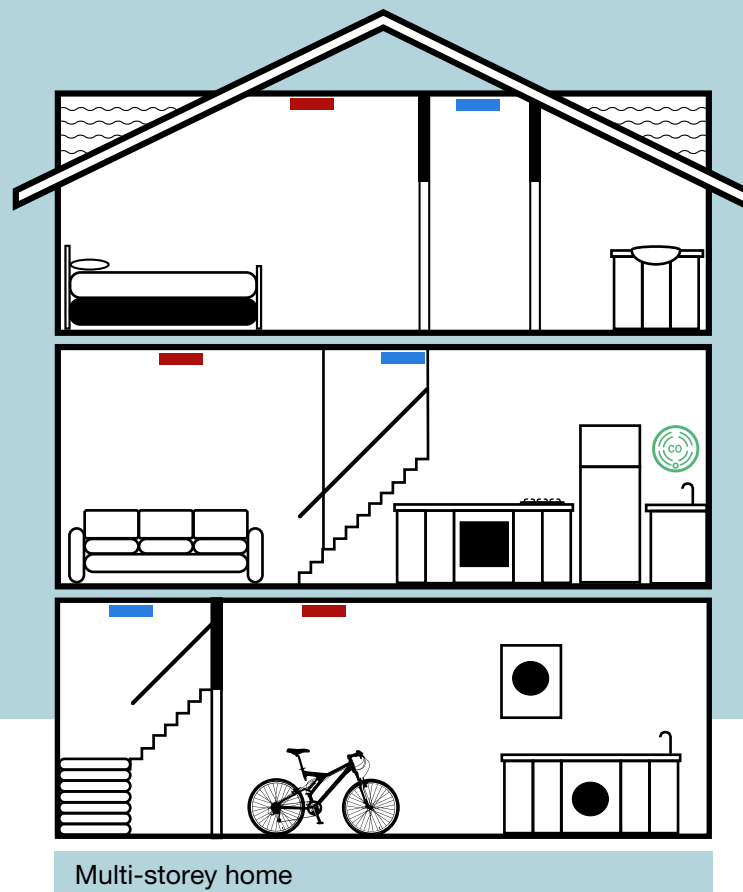
The Tasmania Fire Service recommends:

-  Installing a photoelectric smoke alarm in all sleeping areas, living areas, hallways, and above stairways in multi-storey homes.
-  Installing photoelectric smoke alarms with a 10-year long-life lithium battery.
-  Interconnecting smoke alarms so that if any alarm activates, all smoke alarms will sound.
-  Using the latest technology when selecting new smoke alarms, such as smoke alarms that shout "Fire, Fire!" to better alert children.
-  Considering carbon monoxide alarms for rooms that have gas appliances and/or wood heaters.
-  Replacing smoke alarms every 10 years. Ensure you purchase an alarm that meets Australian Standards.



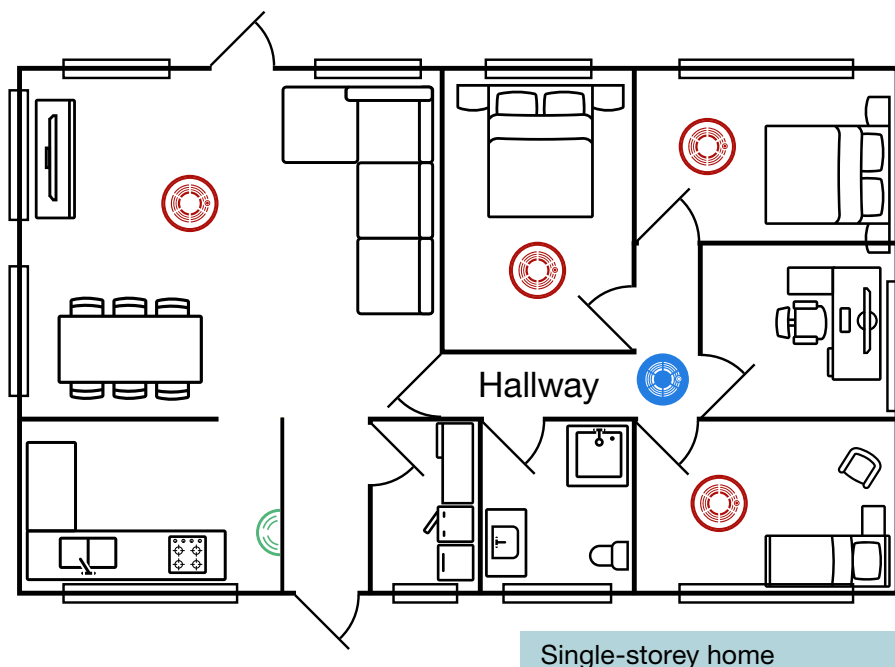
To test, press the test button on the smoke alarm every month, and wait for the 'beep, beep, beep'. If it does beep, this means your smoke alarm is still working.








Multi-storey home

Placing smoke alarms



Single-storey home

Hot tips

-  If you have a smoke alarm with a 9-volt battery, replace the battery every year.
-  Smoke alarms can collect dust! Make sure you dust around your smoke alarms using a vacuum with a soft brush.
-  If your smoke alarm emits a single, occasional beep, it may require cleaning, the battery may need changing, or the smoke alarm may be faulty and must be replaced.



Required by law: A smoke alarm in all hallways. A smoke alarm at the top of all stairways.



Tasmania Fire Service recommends: These extra locations.



Tasmania Fire Service recommends: Carbon monoxide alarms for gas appliances and wood heaters.



Smoke alarms

Installation is quick and easy.



Install on a ceiling on each level of the house at least 30cm away from the wall or any other objects.

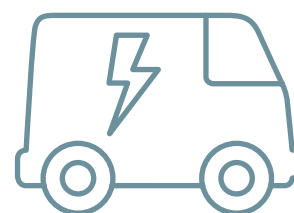


Ideally replace all smoke alarms every 10 years with a sealed lithium battery unit, or replace with a 9-volt battery every 12 months.

Carbon monoxide detector alarms are generally placed on a wall about 1.5m above the floor OR as per manufacturer's instructions. The detector may be placed on the ceiling. **DO NOT** place the detector right next to or over a fireplace or flame-producing appliance.



Some smoke alarms may need to be installed by a qualified electrician. Always follow the manufacturer's recommendations.

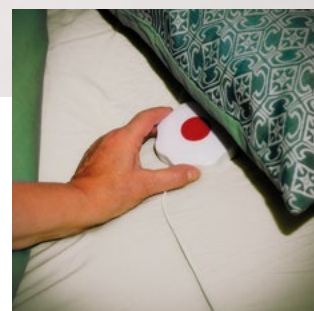


Smoke alarms

for the deaf and hard of hearing.



Specialised smoke alarms are available for people who are deaf or hard of hearing, and can also be linked to personal alarms used by older people or those with disabilities. For more information visit expression.com.au or Phone/TTY: 03 6228 1955.



Smoke alarms in rental properties

The tenant and the property owner **share responsibility** to ensure alarms work.

Property owner responsibilities:

- Install either mains-powered or 10-year non-removable lithium battery photoelectric smoke alarms.
- Clean, test and ensure all alarms are operating prior to new occupancy.
- Replace back-up batteries in mains-powered smoke alarms.
- Replace alarms every 10 years.

Tenant responsibilities:

- Test and clean alarms.
- Report faults to owner/manager.
- Notify owner/manager of any fire safety concerns.



To find out more, go to www.cbos.tas.gov.au/topics/housing/renting/beginning-tenancy/smoke-alarms



Kitchens

Keep looking when cooking.

The kitchen is the room where most fires occur in the home.

Cooking left unattended is the most common cause of fires in the kitchen, so be sure to look when you cook.

- Heat oil carefully and do not overfill a pot or pan.
- Never try to carry a burning pot or pan.
- Keep pot handles turned inwards.
- Don't hang objects over oven door handles, such as tea towels.
- Store flammable materials away from the stove.
- Empty the crumbs from your toaster regularly, and never position the toaster near curtains or blinds.
- Wear clothing with tight-fitting sleeves when cooking.
- Use a lid or fire blanket to smother a fire in a pot or pan if safe to do so.



To find out more, and download the Kitchen Fire Safety Fact Sheet, go to Home Fire Safety at www.fire.tas.gov.au



Hot tips



Check that the stove, cooktop, oven and other heat sources are turned off before leaving home or going to sleep.



Never use water to extinguish an oil or grease fire.



Always supervise children in the kitchen.



A fire blanket should be in every kitchen. Only use if you think it is safe to do so.



Don't let fats and oils build up around the stove, as they can catch fire.

DO NOT use a gas or coal barbecue inside the home.





Heating

Heaters are a major cause of fires, especially during winter.

- **Never** leave clothes near the heater if leaving the house or going to bed.
- **Check** clothing regularly if drying near a heater.
- **Don't** sit too close to the heater.
- **Clean** and maintain chimneys and heater flues annually.
- **Maintain** heaters according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- **Don't** leave your heater door open or remove screens on open fires.
- **Supervise** children near heaters and open fires.

Hot tips



Ensure home heating, including flues and chimneys, are regularly cleaned and serviced by a certified technician.



Extinguish open fires before leaving home or going to sleep.



To find out more, and download the Heating Fire Safety Fact Sheet, go to Home Fire Safety at www.fire.tas.gov.au

Remember: 2 metres from the heater!



Don't place clothing or any flammable material too close to heaters – it should be at least **two metres** from any source of heat. Use fire screens at all times with open fires.



Be careful with the disposal of ashes from the hearth or wood heater. Ashes can take up to 5 days to cool. Always place ashes in a metal container. Dispose of ashes well clear of your home and pour water over them.



Never use an outdoor heater indoors.



Electrical

If it's electric, be safe and check it.

Electrical items in the home can include the power supply, fixed appliances, portable appliances, power boards and extension leads.



Hot tips

-  All electrical equipment should have an Australian Standard or a Regulatory Compliance Mark (RCM).
-  Make sure power boards have overload protection and are not covered by floor rugs, clothing, pillows or doonas.
-  It is important to maintain good airflow around electrical items and appliances and remove anything from around or on top of them.
-  Do not charge electrical devices on beds or flammable surfaces.



To find out more, and download the Electrical Safety Fact Sheet, go to Home Fire Safety at www.fire.tas.gov.au

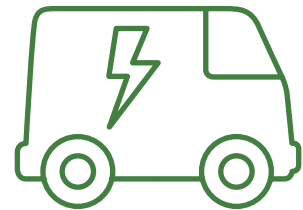


Always let the clothes dryer complete the cool cycle before stopping. Clean the lint filter before each use.

Only use approved charging devices. Charge items on flat surfaces that are clear of flammable items and unplug as soon as they are charged.



Only use certified electrical tradespeople to repair damaged or faulty electrical appliances, wiring or equipment.



Ensure electrical appliances such as hair dryers and hair straighteners are not left on surfaces that can burn.



Only plug in one electrical device per socket. Do not overload power boards or 'piggyback' plugs into one socket or use double adaptors.



Cigarettes, open flames and heat packs

Cigarettes, candles, incense and oil burners can cause fires. Always extinguish any open flame or cigarette before leaving home or going to sleep.

- **Dampen** cigarette butts before putting them in the rubbish.
- Use a **child resistant** lighter. Educate children that lighters and matches are tools not toys.
- **Store matches and lighters** out of children's sight and out of their reach.
- **Make sure** your candles are sitting on candle holders and on a non-flammable surface.
- Keep curtains and other items **clear of open flames**.

Hot tips



Do not smoke in bed. Smoking in bed is one of the leading causes of fire-related deaths.




Always supervise open flames.



To find out more, and download the Cigarettes, Open Flames and Heat Packs Fact Sheets, go to **Home Fire Safety** at www.fire.tas.gov.au





Portable fire extinguishers

There are a number of types of portable fire extinguishers available, and some extinguishers are rated for one or more types of fire. Some extinguishers can be extremely dangerous to use on certain types of fire and can increase the fire and threaten your safety. Some extinguishers are also considered ineffective against certain types of fire.

 You should be trained in the use of an extinguisher or fire blanket to use them safely and effectively.

Tasmania Fire Service recommends the **Powder ABE extinguishers** (pictured below) for use in your home.*

This extinguisher is suitable for the following types of fire:

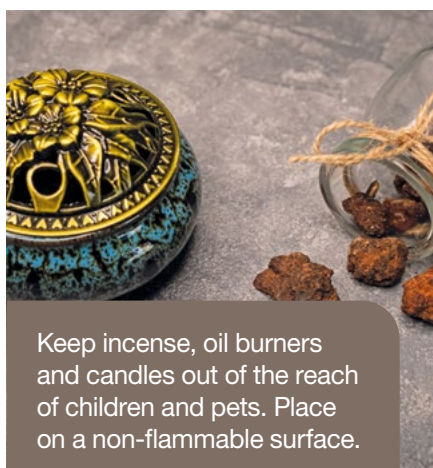
-  Wood, paper, plastics etc
-  Flammable liquids
-  Flammable gases
-  Energised electrical equipment



This extinguisher **IS NOT** suitable for use in kitchens with cooking oils or fats. A fire blanket must be used for kitchen fires.



Wheat filled heat packs (wheat bags or wheat packs) can help pain, but they also have the potential to cause burns and fire if improperly used. Do not apply directly to the skin – use a cover or a towel.



Keep incense, oil burners and candles out of the reach of children and pets. Place on a non-flammable surface.



Extinguish cigarettes in heavy, deep-sided ashtray or metal container filled with sand.



Make sure oil burners are placed on a non-flammable surface and **DO NOT** place near windows – curtains can catch fire easily.

Wheat filled heat packs can help pain, but they also have the potential to cause burns and catch fire. Ensure the wheat pack you purchase comes with instructions and follow them carefully.





Bedrooms







Faulty appliances are a major cause of fires in the bedroom. Electric blankets, heaters, air conditioners and fans should be checked regularly by a qualified tradesperson.

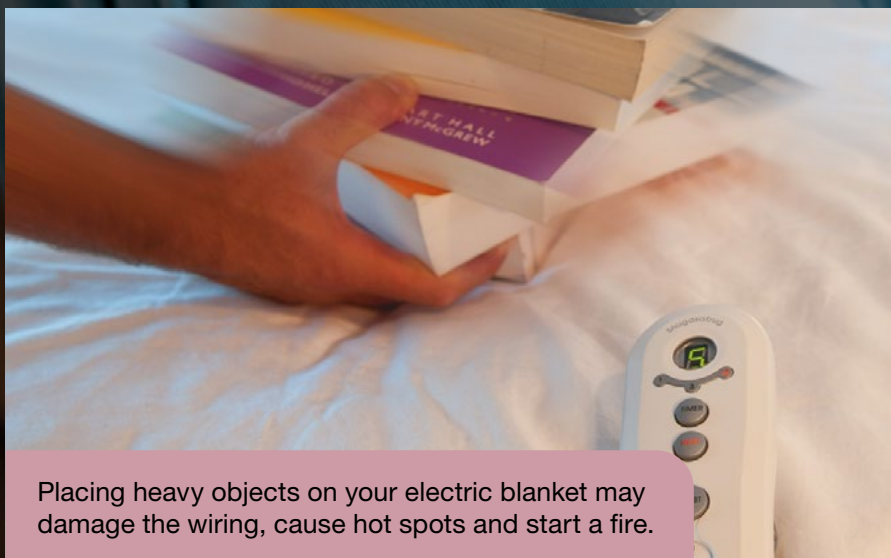
Electric Blankets

All electric blankets sold in Australia must comply with Australian safety standards. However, careless use can cause electric shock, fire and possibly even death.

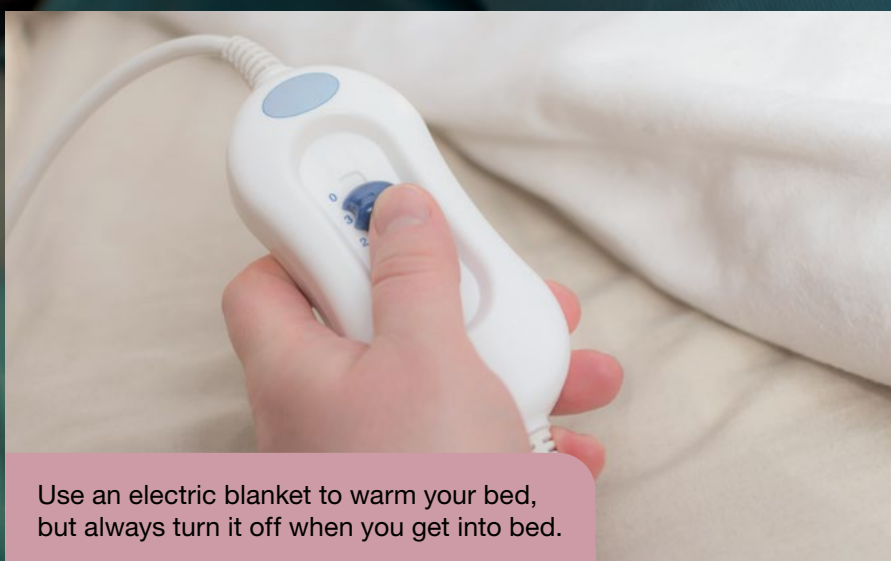
- Read and follow manufacturer instructions.
- Throw out electric blankets that are worn or old.
- Never use an electric blanket with a waterbed.
- Never place a baby on an electric blanket – they can dehydrate and get burns at fairly low temperatures.

Hot tips

-  Leave your electric blanket on your bed. Folding may cause damage to the wiring.
-  Always switch off electric blankets when leaving the house.
-  **Do not** lean, roll, lie or press against a hot water bottle.
-  **Do not** smoke in bed.



Placing heavy objects on your electric blanket may damage the wiring, cause hot spots and start a fire.



Use an electric blanket to warm your bed, but always turn it off when you get into bed.

Hot Water Bottles

Hot water bottles are comforting for warmth or can assist with injury treatment. Incorrect use can result in serious burns.

- **Do not** use a hot water bottle in a bed fitted with an electric blanket.
- Replace hot water bottles every 12 months.
- Check hot water bottles for damage before each use.
- Read and follow manufacturer instructions.
- Do not use boiling water to fill a hot water bottle.
- Use a cover or wrap a towel around the hot water bottle.
- Remove the hot water bottle before you get into bed.



Some light globes can be hot. Fit bedside lamps with cooler compact fluorescent or LED globes. Don't place material over lamps.





Outside the home

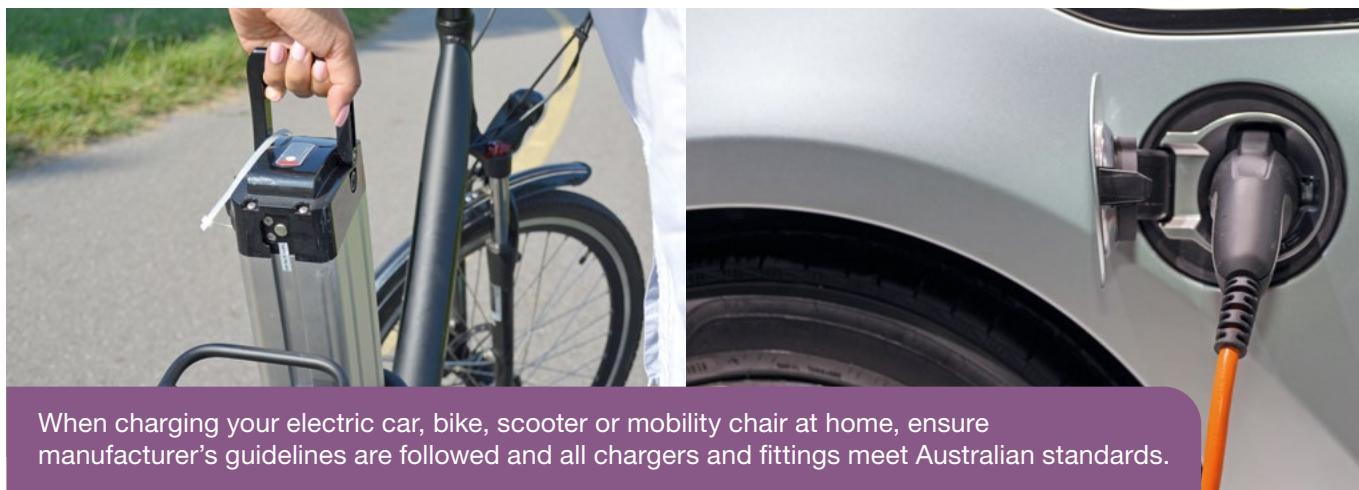
Your home may have a balcony, yard, shed, garage or deck. Fires can grow quickly due to the presence of items like gas cylinders, petrol cans and other chemicals. Fire pits, barbecues and outdoor fireplaces can be dangerous if not used correctly.

There are simple actions you can take to reduce the risk of fire when using a firepit.

- The fire pit should be kept **CLEAR** of structures or foliage. Do not place the fire pit on a flammable surface.
- Always have a continuous supply of water or a fire extinguisher ready to completely **PUT OUT** the fire when you are finished.
- Always have a responsible adult **WATCH** and control the fire. Only burn clean, dry, well-seasoned wood.
- Keep a **WATCH** on the weather. Do not use a fire pit if it is too windy or there is a Total Fire Ban.
- Always **WATCH** children and pets around a fire pit.
- **REMOVE DEBRIS** from the last fire before starting a new fire.
- **NEVER** use outdoor cooking equipment inside your home.



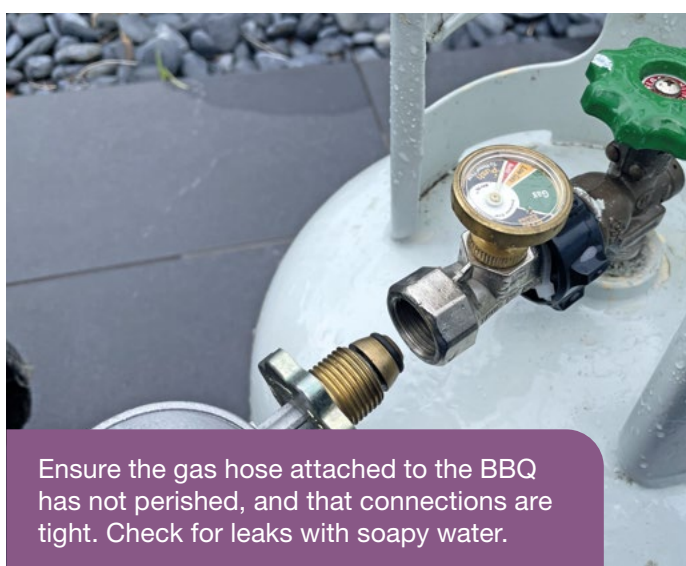
To find out more, and download the Outside the Home Fire Safety Fact Sheet, go to Home Fire Safety at www.fire.tas.gov.au



When charging your electric car, bike, scooter or mobility chair at home, ensure manufacturer's guidelines are followed and all chargers and fittings meet Australian standards.






Only use BBQs outdoors and maintain a distance of at least 50 cm from all walls or fences. Never leave cooking unattended.



Ensure the gas hose attached to the BBQ has not perished, and that connections are tight. Check for leaks with soapy water.

Hot tips

-  Regularly clean your BBQ of grease and fat build-up, including the drip tray.
-  Do not use a barbecue inside your home, garage or other enclosed areas due to the potential build-up of harmful smoke and fumes.
-  If you no longer require chemicals, dispose of them correctly and safely.

In your shed or garage, store chemical products such as petrol safely away from ignition sources and out of reach of children.





Home fire escape plan

Possibly the most important plan you will ever make.

Design a home fire escape plan to suit your home and talk about it with everybody in the house. If a child has been involved in planning and practising an escape plan they are more likely to get out alive in a house fire.

- Make a **home fire escape plan** and **practise** it at least twice a year.
- Try and have **two ways out** of a room.
- **Use windows** as an alternative means of escape if safe to do so.
- **Close doors behind you** to prevent fire and smoke from spreading.
- Have one **Safe Meeting Place** outside your home (for example, your letterbox).



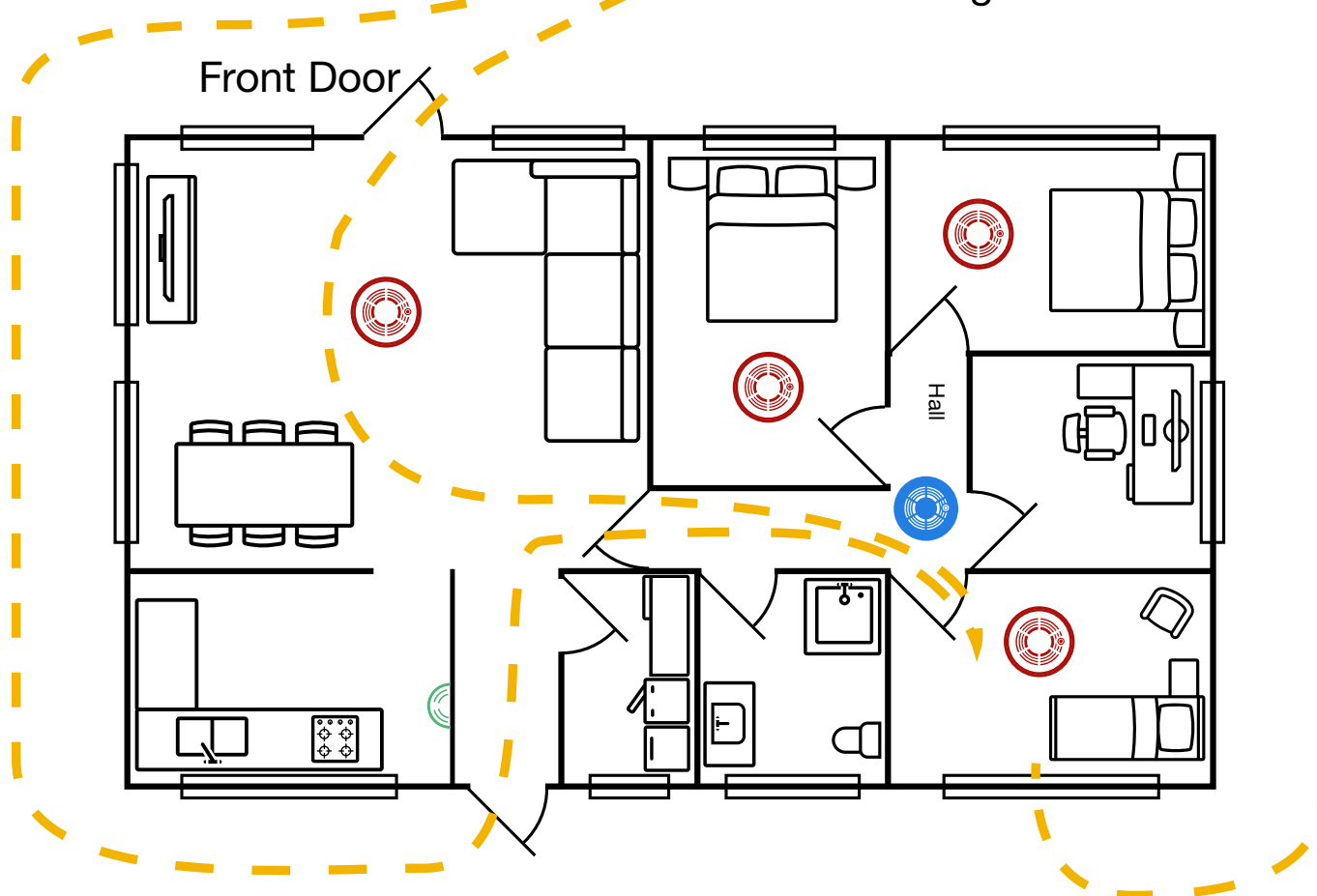
To find out more information on
Home Fire Safety and Escape Plans go to
Home Fire Safety at www.fire.tas.gov.au

You can start your plan on
the grid provided on page 23



Sample plan

Safe Meeting Place
e.g. letterbox



Required by law:

A smoke alarm in all hallways. A smoke alarm at the top of all stairways.



Tasmania Fire Service recommends:

These extra locations.



Tasmania Fire Service recommends:

Carbon monoxide alarms for gas appliances and wood heaters.

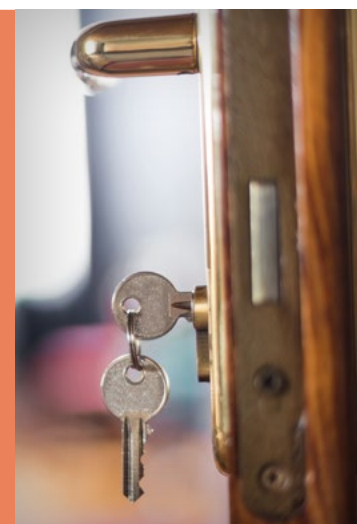
Hot tips



Make sure you can get out of your home quickly if there is a fire. The best fire escape plan is worthless if your escape route is blocked. While deadlocks and security grilles may deter intruders, they can be deadly in a fire, so keep the keys in the locked door.




Make sure your house number is clearly visible from the street.




Child safety

What can you do?


Supervise and educate your children:

-  Don't let your children use fire – helping with lighting the fire or burning off makes children think that they can control fire.




Remove the temptation:

-  Teach your children to tell you about any unattended matches or lighters they find and reward them for their honesty.

Make your home fire safe:

-  Have working smoke alarms in all sleeping areas, hallway and living areas.

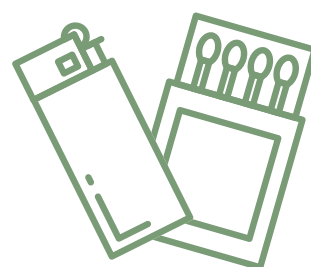
Hot tips

-  **Crawl Low and Go, Go, Go!**
Smoke may harm or kill well before a fire.
-  Teach your children to **Stop, Drop, Rock and Roll** in case their clothes catch fire.
-  Make sure your children know what an alarm sounds like and what to do if it goes off. Sleeping children are unlikely to wake to an alarm unless it's in their room and they have been taught what the sound of the alarm means.



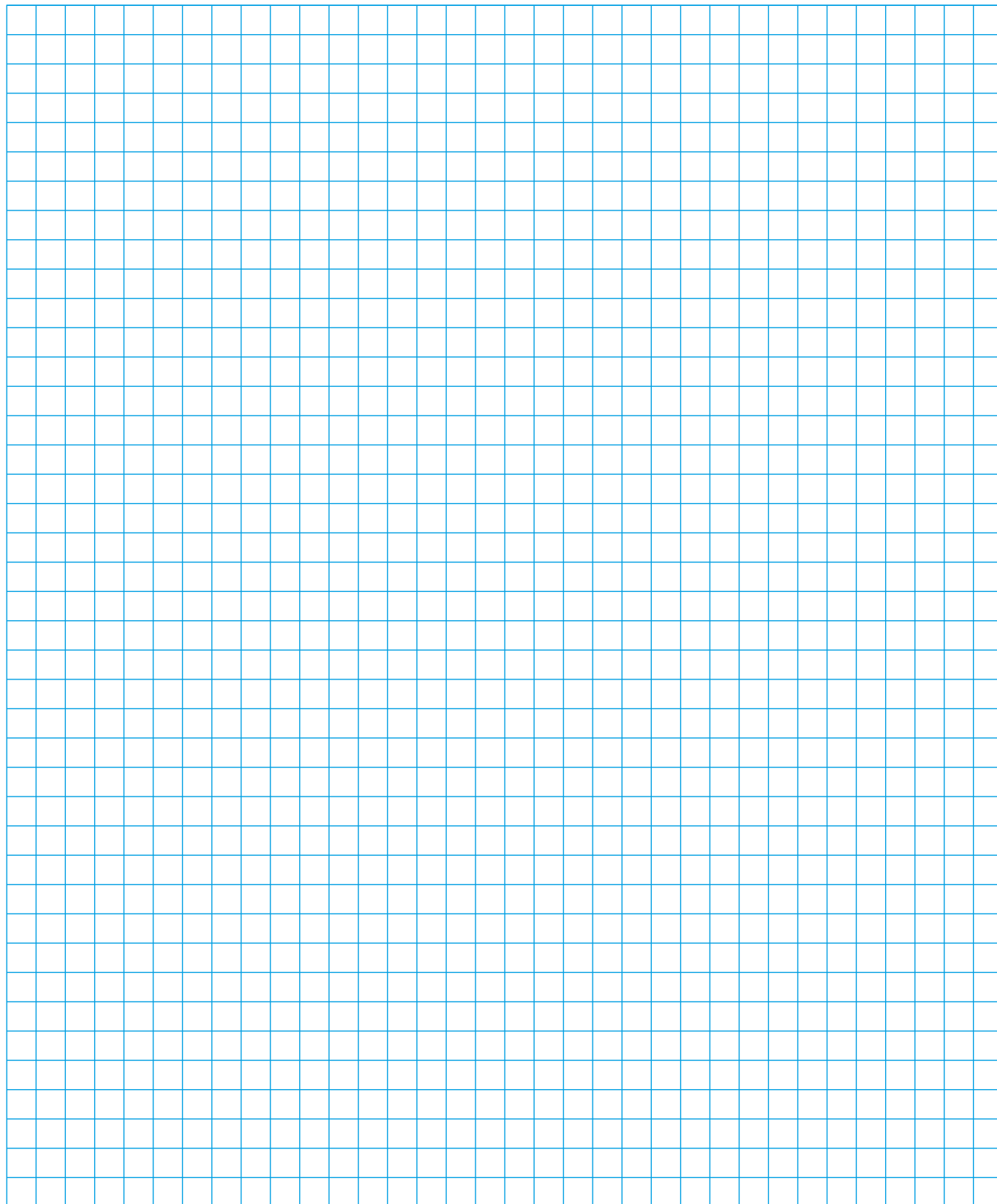
Supervise your children at all times, especially around fire, cooking and heating.

Lock away matches and lighters – just like you lock away medicines and other dangerous household substances. Educate children that lighters and matches are tools not toys.



Home Fire Escape Plan

Draw a plan using the grid below and mark in the exits you could use in a fire emergency. Remember to include **2 safe ways** out of any sleeping areas to your **Safe Meeting Place**. See page 21 of this booklet for a sample plan. **Detach your plan and place on your fridge.**



Remember to:

Get OUT and STAY OUT!

Go to your safe meeting place

Dial 000

Fire safety checklist

- ☐ Have working smoke alarms and test and clean them regularly.
- ☐ Have a planned and practised home fire escape plan.
- ☐ Keep looking when cooking.
- ☐ Only plug in one electrical device per power board outlet (no double adaptors).
- ☐ Keep exits clear.
- ☐ Keep all items that may burn at least 2 metres away from heat sources.
- ☐ Keep lighters, matches, candles, incense, oil burners and cigarettes out of reach of children.
- ☐ Store chemicals safely away from ignition sources and out of reach of children.
- ☐ Always leave keys in locked doors and security screens when you are inside so you can escape if a fire occurs.



www.fire.tas.gov.au



Also available:

A Visual Guide to Home Fire Safety



For further information:

fire.tas.gov.au
tfseducation.com.au
Free-call 1800 000 699



TAS ALERT

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