

# Home Fire Safety

FIRE PREVENTION  
IS MY INTENTION



Tips for preventing fires in the home



# Fire safety begins at home

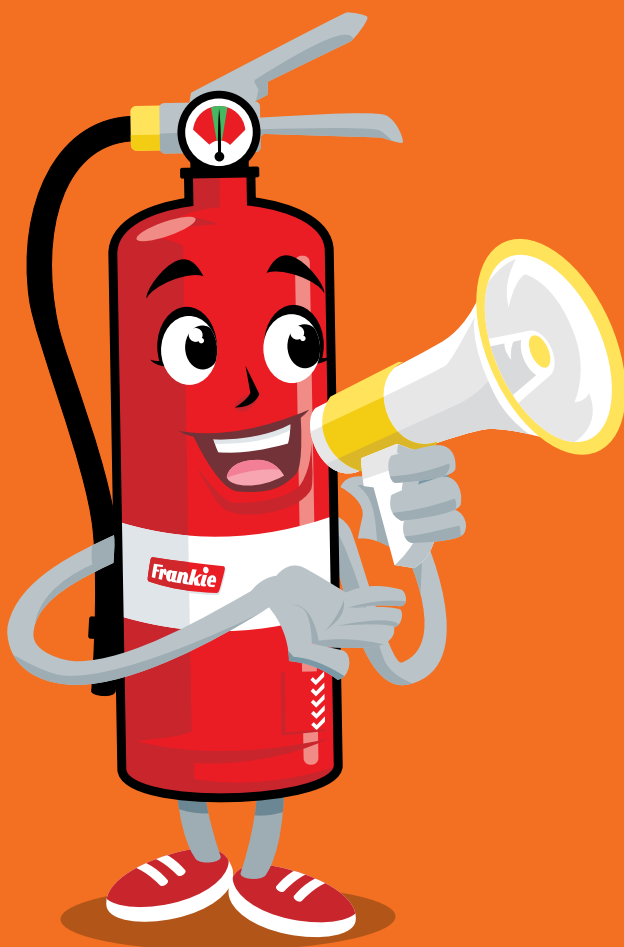
A fire in your home can be devastating, even fatal. Once a fire starts it can spread rapidly putting you and your loved ones at risk. While the dangers of fire are very real, there is a lot you can do to protect yourself, your family and your home.

The Victorian fire and rescue services are committed to keeping communities safe through sharing home fire safety strategies and information with Victorians.





Young children, older people, people with a disability and smokers are at a higher risk of being injured or not surviving a fire in their home.

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.

**Look out for this symbol  which highlights an important safety message or tip.**



**HI, I'M FRANKIE  
THESE ARE MY TOP  
TIPS FOR FIRE SAFETY:**

-  Have a working smoke alarm and test it regularly.
-  Look out for fire hazards in the home.
-  Have a home fire escape plan and practise it regularly.
-  If a fire occurs in your home, get out, stay out and call Triple Zero (000).

# Fires are fast!



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



With no warning, the fire goes unchecked. It will quickly take hold, giving off poisonous smoke.



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.

# Smoke alarms



**!** Only working smoke alarms save lives.

You are more likely to die in a residential fire without a working smoke alarm.

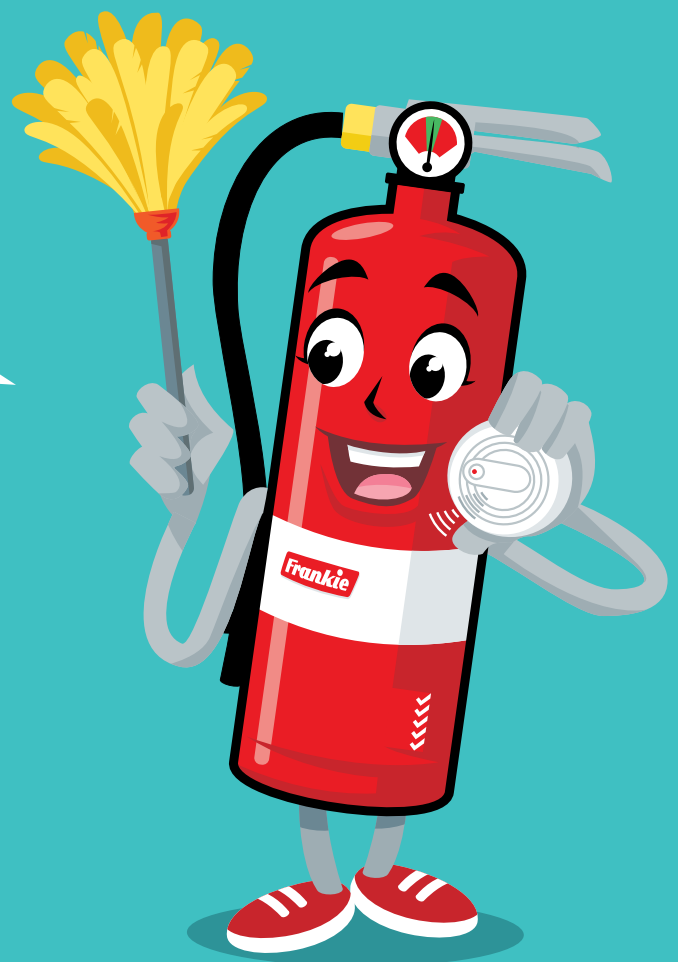
A working smoke alarm provides you with early warning of a fire and gives you time to escape safely. You should have at least one smoke alarm on each level of your home.

For more information on smoke alarms visit [frv.vic.gov.au](http://frv.vic.gov.au) and [cfa.vic.gov.au](http://cfa.vic.gov.au)

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](http://expression.com.au)

**DON'T BE ALARMED,  
FOLLOW MY TIPS:**

- 🔥 If you have a smoke alarm with a 9-volt battery, replace the battery every year.
- 🔥 Dust around the outside cover of your smoke alarm at least once a year.
- 🔥 If your smoke alarm emits a single, occasional beep, the battery needs to be changed or the smoke alarm may be faulty and must be replaced.





**!** Australian fire services recommend smoke alarms be installed in all living areas, hallways and bedrooms.

Install smoke alarms with a 10 year-long-life battery.

Victorian fire and rescue services recommend that smoke alarms be interconnected so that when any alarm activates, all smoke alarms will sound.

When you're asleep, you lose your sense of smell. Working smoke alarms will alert you if there is smoke from a fire.



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.



Replace all smoke alarms every 10 years with a lithium battery unit.



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

# Home fire escape plan

No matter what type of home you live in, it is vital you know what to do if a fire occurs.



**IF YOU SEE A FIRE,  
GET OUT AND STAY OUT**

- 🔥 Keep your exits clear.
- 🔥 Always leave keys in locked doors and security screens when you are inside so you can escape if a fire occurs.



# ! It is important to have a home fire escape plan in the event of an emergency.

- Get down low, and stay out of the smoke.
- Alert people on the way out.
- If safe to do so, close doors as you exit.
- Get out and stay out.
- Meet at a safe place outside your home, e.g. letterbox or footpath.
- Call Triple Zero (000) and ask for FIRE.



A planned and practised home fire escape plan could save your life, see page 19.



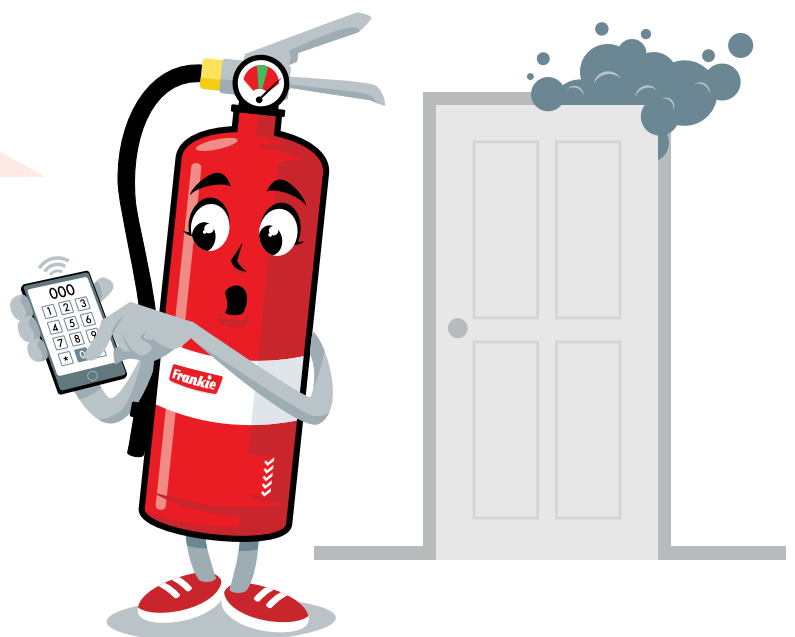
Make sure your house number is clearly visible from the street.



If you live in a high-rise building, know where the fire exits are, and always take the stairs.

## IF YOU CAN'T ESCAPE...

- 🔥 If it's safe, close the door to the room on fire.
- 🔥 Get as far away from the smoke and fire as possible.
- 🔥 Call Triple Zero (000), ask for FIRE and say you need help to get out – don't hang up.



# Electrical

Electrical fires are a common type of fire in the home.

For more information on electrical safety, visit the Energy Safe Victoria website [esv.vic.gov.au](http://esv.vic.gov.au)

**IF IT'S ELECTRIC,  
BE SAFE AND CHECK IT**

- 🔥 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, e.g. pillows and doonas.



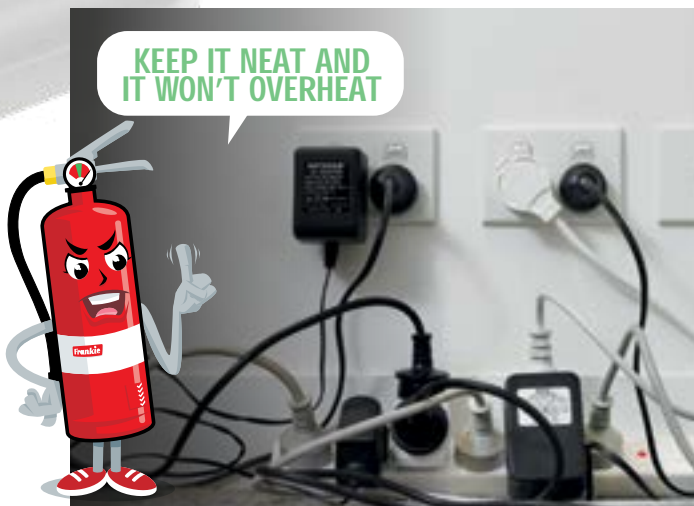




**!** Electrical items in the home can include the power supply, fixed appliances, portable appliances, power boards and extension leads.

It is important to maintain good airflow around electrical items and appliances and remove anything from around or on top of them.

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



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



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




Only use approved charging devices. Charge items on surfaces that do not burn and unplug as soon as they are charged.



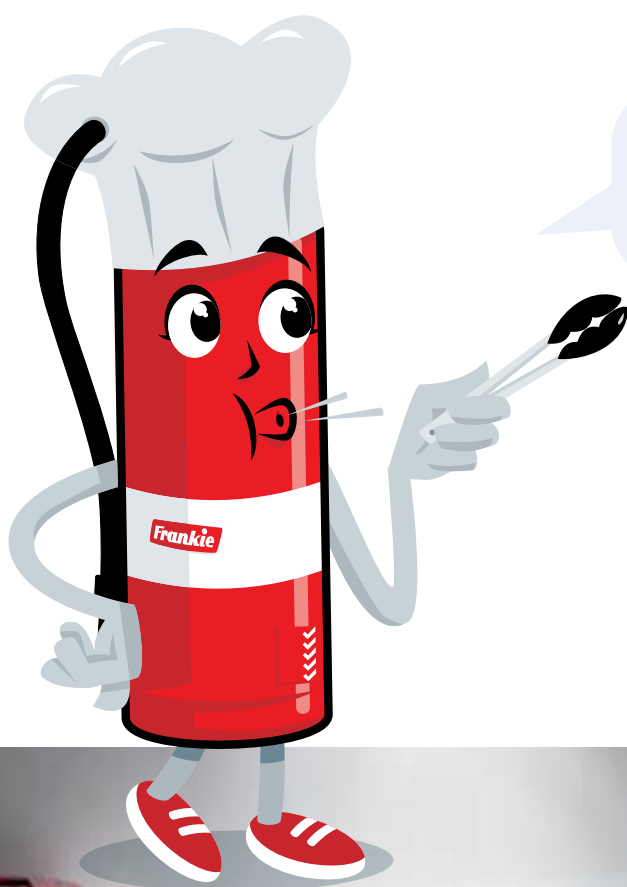
Always let the clothes dryer complete the cool cycle before stopping. Clean the lint filter before each use.

# Kitchen and 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.





## KEEP LOOKING WHEN COOKING

- 🔥 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.



Keep items that could burn at least 1 metre away from cooking and heat sources.



A fire extinguisher and fire blanket should be in every kitchen. Only use if you think it is safe.

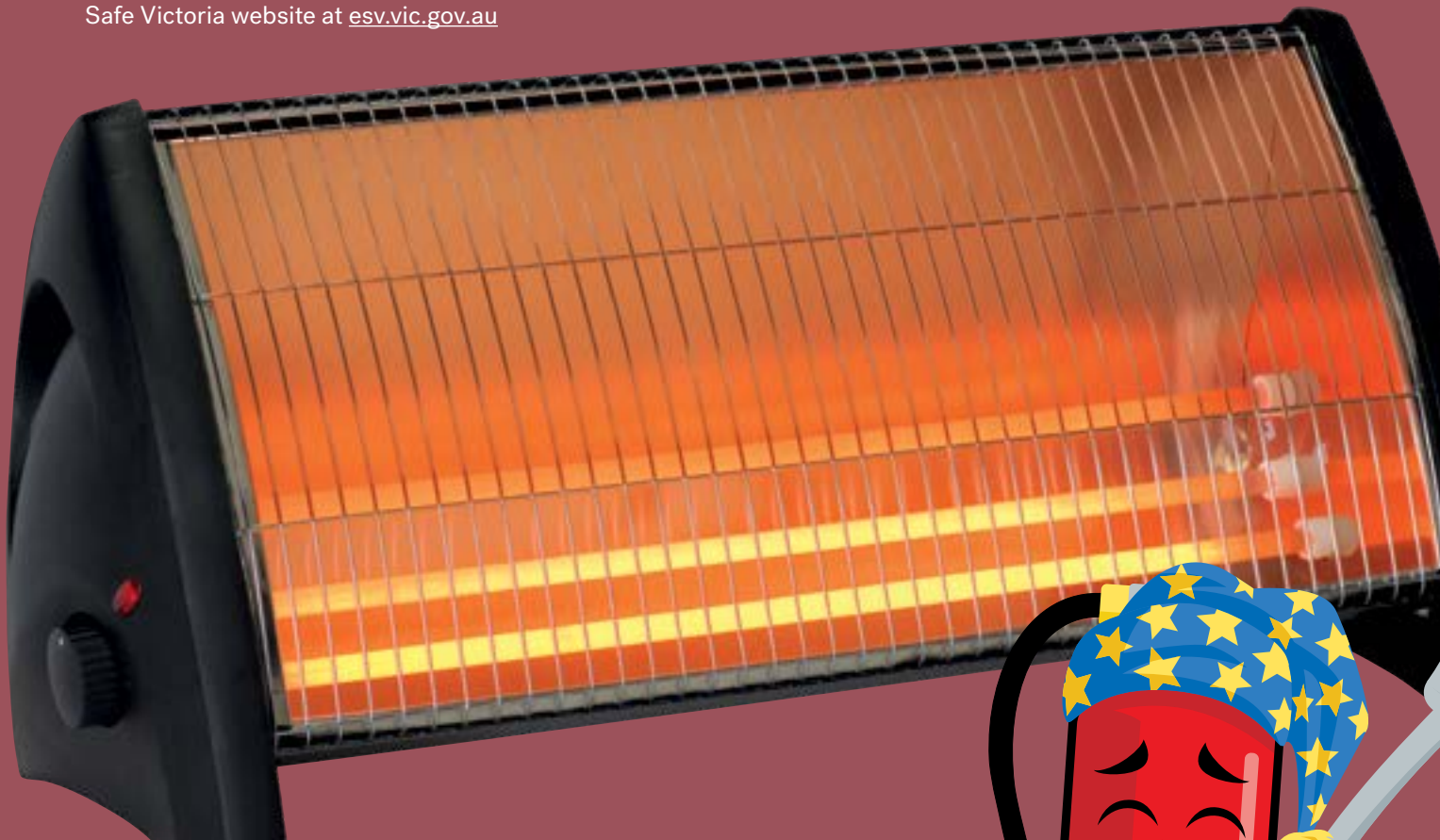


Keep stovetop, griller, oven, range hood and cooking area free from built-up grease and oil.

# Heating

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

For more information visit the Energy Safe Victoria website at [esv.vic.gov.au](http://esv.vic.gov.au)



**TURN OFF THE HEAT  
BEFORE YOU GO TO SLEEP**

- 🔥 Ensure home heating, including flues and chimneys, are regularly cleaned and serviced by a certified technician.
- 🔥 Turn off all heating and extinguish open fires before leaving home or going to sleep.





! Always use a fire screen in front of an open fire.

1 m  
minimum

1 m

Keep items that can burn at least 1 metre away from all heat sources.



Check that embers are cold before disposal.



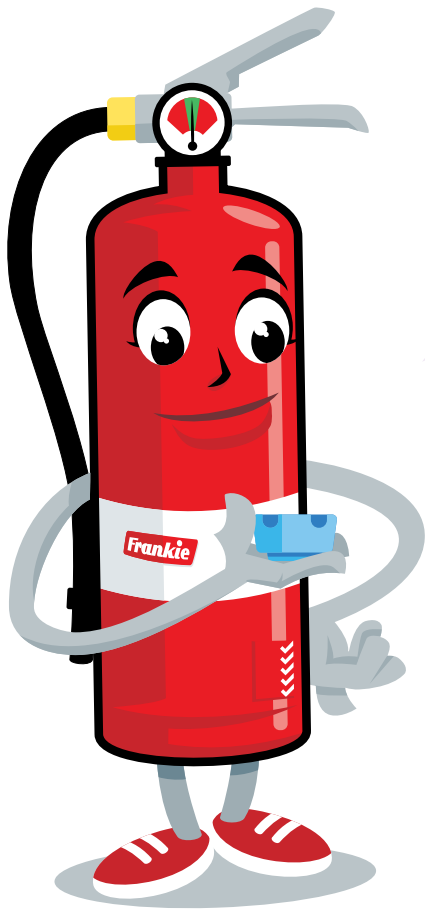
Children should be supervised near heaters and open fires.

# Cigarettes and open flames

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

- ! Only use candles, incense and oil burners on stable surfaces that will not burn.





## STICK IT, DON'T FLICK IT

- 🔥 Do not smoke in bed. Smoking in bed is one of the leading causes of fire-related deaths.
- 🔥 Open flames should always be supervised.
- 🔥 Keep lighters, matches, candles, incense and oil burners out of reach of children.
- 🔥 Consider an alternative to an open flame candle, e.g. a battery-operated candle.



Extinguish cigarettes in heavy, high-sided ashtrays and ensure they are out before disposal.



Keep curtains and other items that could catch fire at least 1 metre from open flames.



Carelessly discarded cigarettes have caused **MAJOR FIRES** in multi-storey buildings.

Stick it, don't flick it; particularly if you live in a multi storey building.

# 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.







**No bubbles, no troubles!**

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



Regularly clean your BBQ of grease and fat build-up including the drip tray.



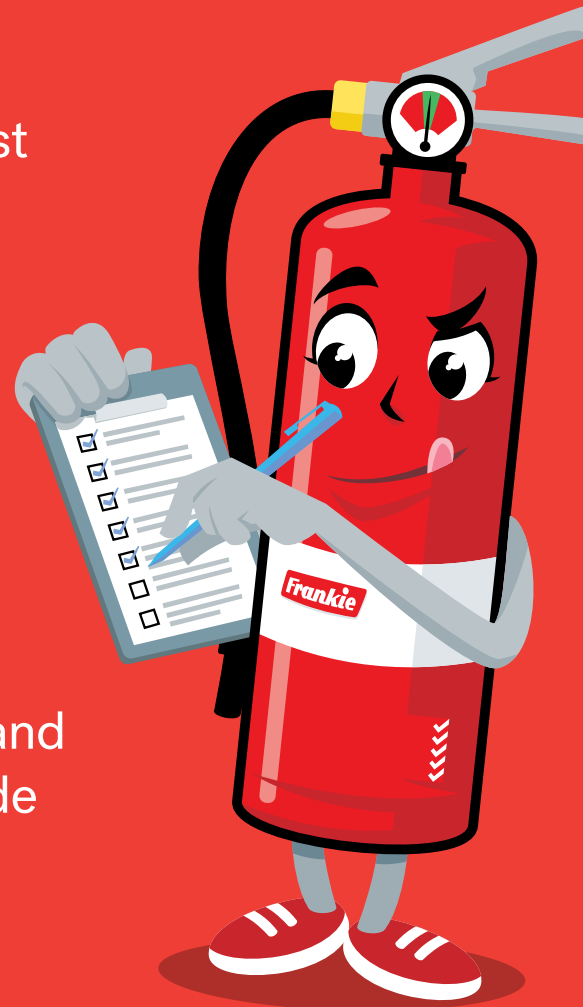
Only use BBQs outdoors and maintain a distance of at least 50cm from all walls or fences. Never leave cooking unattended.

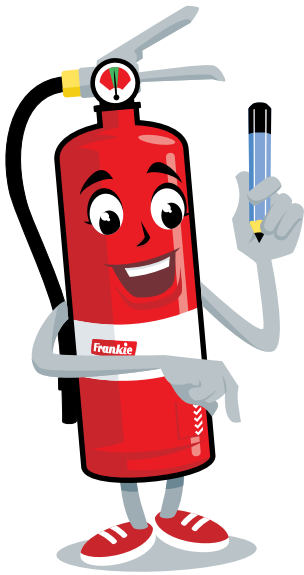
## STORE YOUR CHEMICALS SAFELY

- 🔥 In your shed or garage, store chemical products such as petrol safely away from ignition sources and out of reach of children.
- 🔥 If you no longer require them, dispose of chemicals correctly and safely. For more information visit [sustainability.vic.gov.au/detoxyourhome](https://sustainability.vic.gov.au/detoxyourhome)

# Fire safety checklist

- Have working smoke alarms and test 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 1 metre 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.





**!** It is important to have a home fire escape plan so you know how to quickly exit your home in the event of an emergency.

Your address

.....  
.....  
.....

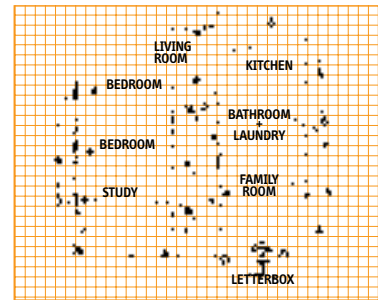
Safe meeting place

.....  
.....  
.....

**Plan your escape.  
Remember these important points:**

- Know two ways out of every room.
- Close the door to prevent fire and smoke from spreading.
- Crawl low in smoke.
- Get out. Alert others.
- When outside, stay out. Never go back inside!
- Meet at a common meeting place at the front of the house; e.g. letterbox. Wait until the fire brigade arrives.
- Phone Triple Zero (000) from the nearest available phone; e.g. neighbour's house.

**An example of a home fire escape plan.**



Large grid area for drawing a home fire escape plan.

# Further information

For more information, visit the following websites:

## Fire services

Fire Rescue Victoria (FRV)  
[frv.vic.gov.au](http://frv.vic.gov.au)

Country Fire Authority (CFA)  
[cfa.vic.gov.au](http://cfa.vic.gov.au)

## Other websites

Energy Safe Victoria (ESV)  
[esv.vic.gov.au](http://esv.vic.gov.au)

Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS)  
[tisnational.gov.au](http://tisnational.gov.au)

VicEmergency  
[emergency.vic.gov.au](http://emergency.vic.gov.au)

Expression Australia  
[expression.com.au](http://expression.com.au)

Department of Families, Fairness  
and Housing  
[vic.gov.au/department-families-fairness-and-housing](http://vic.gov.au/department-families-fairness-and-housing)

Kidsafe Victoria  
[kidsafevic.com.au](http://kidsafevic.com.au)

Emergency Management Victoria (EMV)  
[emv.vic.gov.au](http://emv.vic.gov.au)

Sustainability Victoria  
[sustainability.vic.gov.au](http://sustainability.vic.gov.au)

Victorian Building Authority  
[vba.vic.gov.au](http://vba.vic.gov.au)

