

# Preventing a Fire in the Home



## INFORMATION SHEET

The speed of a house fire can engulf a room in less than five minutes. We've put some tips together on how you can prevent home fires.

### SMOKE ALARMS

All smoke alarms in Foundation Housing properties are tested at least once each year. Housing Coordinators conduct the "push button" test as part of routine property inspections. The test results are recorded in the property inspection report. This is to ensure the smoke alarms are still working and would alert you if a fire has started in your home.

However, if you notice something different or odd about your smoke alarm, please contact our Property Services Team as soon as possible on 1300 895 205.

### HOME FIRE ESCAPE PLAN

Making a home fire safety plan with your household is simple and could save your life. Practising your plan will help you to respond better during a fire when you're stressed or have just woken up.

### LITHIUM-ION BATTERIES

Lithium-ion batteries are a major cause of house fires in WA. There are several reasons a fire may occur in Lithium-Ion battery operated equipment, including overcharging, overheating, batteries being poorly manufactured, and impact damage to batteries. [Click here](#) to learn more about lithium-ion batteries.

### CANDLES

- Always extinguish candles and oil burners before leaving a room or going to sleep.
- Candles and oil burners should only be used under adult supervision.
- Candles and oil burners should never be left unattended.
- Place candles and oil burners on a stable, dry, heat-resistant surface away from open windows, curtains, blinds or any other combustible materials.
- Keep lighters and matches out of the reach of children.
- Teach your children that candles, lighters and matches are tools, not toys.

### SMOKING

- Only smoke outside – smoking inside your home can be fatal.
- Smoking in bed or on the couch is especially dangerous – if you fall asleep and drop your cigarette or ash embers onto flammable material, you may not notice the burning until it is too late.
- If a person is likely to smoke in bed, make sure a smoke alarm is installed inside this bedroom.
- Never leave lit cigarettes unattended.
- Keep matches and cigarette lighters out of reach of children.
- Always use an ashtray – use heavy, deep ashtrays that will not tip over, and use water or sand to butt the cigarette out.
- Ensure your cigarette butt is fully extinguished before disposing of it.
- Before emptying ashtrays into a bin ensure all of the ash has been extinguished.
- Empty ashtrays into outside bins.

## PORTABLE FIREPLACES

When using your fireplace, it is important to:

- Avoid using combustible liquids to light open fires – use firelighters instead.
- Keep all items at least one metre away from the fireplace.
- Always use a fire screen in front of open fireplaces.
- Never leave children near the fireplace unsupervised.
- Extinguish all flames and embers completely before leaving the room.
- When disposing of ash, ensure it is completely cool and no embers remain.

## IF AN ELECTRICAL FIRE STARTS

- Do not use water to put it out.
- Turn off the power if it is safe to do so.
- Call 000.

## ELECTRIC BLANKETS

- Always read and follow product instructions as well as the manufacturer's recommendations for use.
- Turn the blanket off before leaving the house or going to sleep.
- Never place objects such as clothing or blankets on the bed when the blanket is switched on.
- Always store the blankets hanging or rolled – folding can damage the wiring inside.
- Check the manufacturer's guidelines for how often it should be inspected by a qualified electrician and when it should be replaced.
- If there is fraying in the blanket or in the cords, have it inspected by an electrician or replace the blanket.

## CLOTHES DRYER

- Install, maintain and use your machine according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Keep the area around the dryer well ventilated and clear from clutter.
- Clean the lint filter every time you use your dryer.
- Avoid overloading the dryer.
- Don't put clothing in the dryer that states 'do not tumble dry' on the clothing tag.
- Make sure clothing is not soiled with flammable or chemical substances, such as oil or petrol.
- Always let the dryer go through its cool down cycle.
- Always turn the dryer off before leaving the house.

## POWER BOARDS AND ADAPTORS

Do not overload power boards, extension leads or adaptors:

- Never piggy-back plugs into one socket or use double adaptors on a power board.
- Remember that an extension lead or adaptor will have a limit to how many amps it can take, so be careful not to overload them.
- Use power boards with built in safety switches or circuit breakers.
- Place power boards on their sides to prevent dust build up in unused points.
- Regularly check that all plugs are firmly fixed in power boards and adaptors.
- Provide adequate ventilation around power boards and adaptors.
- Regularly inspect power boards, extension leads and adaptors for signs of damage and degradation.
- Plug high wattage appliances directly into permanent power points instead of power boards.

## HEATERS

- Clean heaters every three months to remove dust and dirt.
- Always switch the heater off at the power point when not in use.
- Avoid using a double adaptor as it may overload the power supply and cause a fire.
- Always keep items (especially flammable fabrics and material) at least one metre away from the heater.
- Never leave heaters on in bedrooms, especially children's bedrooms.

## IF A KITCHEN FIRE STARTS

- Turn off the stove (if it is safe to do so).
- Use a fire blanket in the first few seconds of ignition if you know how to use one.
- If you don't have a fire blanket, you can use a wooden chopping board to cover a small fire.
- Avoid moving flaming oil or fat.
- If you cannot safely extinguish the fire, leave the kitchen, close the door, evacuate everyone in the house immediately and phone 000.

## STAYING SAFE WHILE COOKING IN THE KITCHEN

- Never leave cooking unattended, not even for a minute: Turn off the stove (or BBQ) before you leave the room or area.
- Keep flammable materials away from heat and flames: This includes aerosols, cleaning agents and cooking oils.
- Keep loose fabric/material away from the stove: This includes clothing, fabrics, tea towels and curtains.
- Keep your oven, range hood and grill clean: A build-up of grease and fat can ignite and cause a fire.
- Don't put anything metallic in the microwave: Metal will heat up very quickly and will catch fire.

## MORE INFORMATION

For more information on preventing fires in the home, please visit the [Department of Fire and Emergency Services](#) website.