

# FACT SHEET



## Fire Safety and Children

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

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 easy to install. If you do not have at least one smoke alarm in your home, buy one today. (See our Smoke Alarm fact sheet for more information).

### Keep Matches and Lighters Out of Reach

Do not leave matches or lighters on coffee tables. Be aware that children can climb and that 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 the stove.

### Safe Heating

Keep children and anything else that can burn at least one 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 as per manufacturers instructions. Check thoroughly and read instructions before use. Do not use with children prone to bedwetting.



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Fabrics such as 100% wool are difficult to ignite and self extinguish.

## Clothing

When considering purchasing clothing for children you should consider:

- Fibre content - purchase fabrics such as 100% polyester, nylon, wool and silk that are difficult to ignite and tend to self extinguish.
- Fabric construction - tight weaves or knits and fabrics without fuzzy or napped surfaces are less likely to ignite and burn rapidly than open knits or weaves, or fabrics with brushed or piled surfaces.

When purchasing clothes intended for sleepwear, consider the flammability of certain fabrics containing cotton, cotton/polyester blends, rayon and acrylic. These are relatively easy to ignite and burn rapidly. Follow the manufacturer's care and cleaning instructions on products labelled "flame resistant" to ensure that their flame resistant properties are maintained.

## 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.



Protective covers should be used on unused power points.

## Keep your Hot Water Cool

Adjust your hot water thermostat to 50°C or below to prevent scalds.

## 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.

## Train your Child-Minders

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

It is important that you take precautions to reduce the threat of fire to your children. However, it is also important that your children know how to respond if there is an emergency. Teach your child their **home address**, and tell them to **dial 000** in an emergency. There are many cases where children have made emergency calls and been responsible for saving the lives of their family members.

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