



Tasmania Fire Service

Home Fire Safety



Smoke Alarms



Placement and maintenance

Escape Plans



Involve all your family

Child Safety



Get them all out alive

Protect what you value!



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

The advice in this booklet is designed to keep you and your family safe and protect what you value.

Fires are fast



30 secs

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

60 secs

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

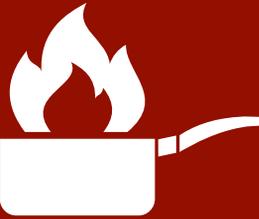
3 mins

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.

Read this booklet! It could save your life!

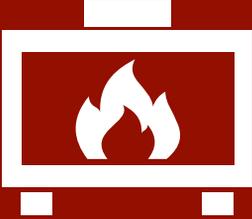
Where do home fires start?

Cooking



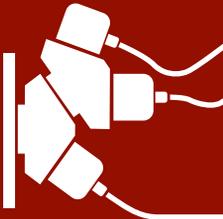
1 Number 1 cause of home fires

Heating



2 Number 2 cause of home fires

Electrical



3 Number 3 cause of home fires

Cigarettes & Candles



4 Number 4 cause of home fires

Get OUT and STAY OUT!



DO NOT take time to try and save belongings. Once out **DO NOT** try and re-enter the house for any reason. **STAY OUT!**

Go to your safe meeting place



Once out of your house, meet at your family's agreed safe meeting place, well away from the fire. Once out **STAY OUT!**

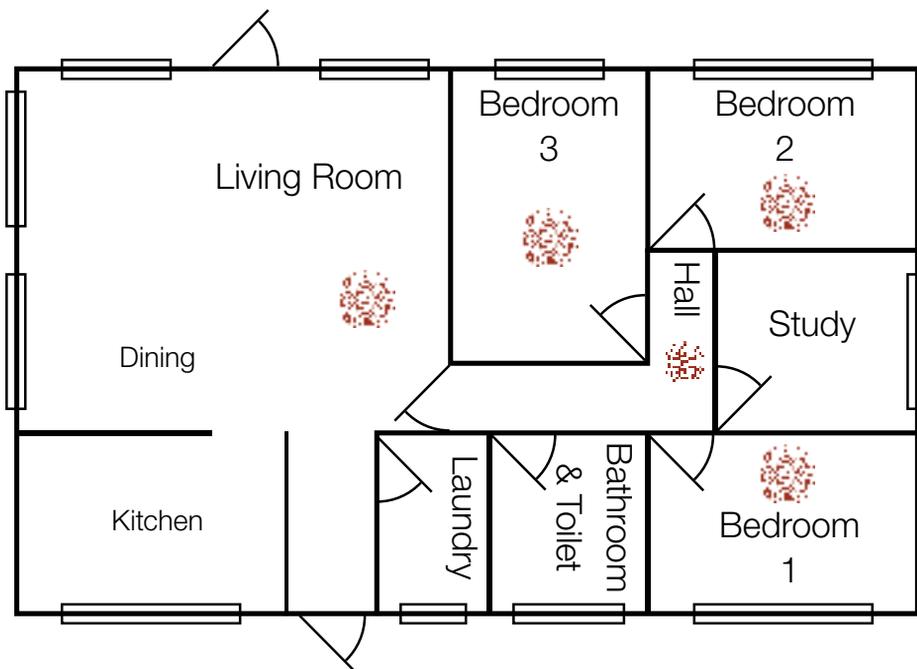
Smoke alarms

Only working smoke alarms save lives!

- You should **install** a photoelectric smoke alarm in each sleeping area (bedroom), hallway and living area. **Smoke alarms** should be supported by a home fire escape plan.
- **Test** alarms monthly.
- **Vacuum** dust from alarms every six months.
- **Replace** batteries once a year. Some alarms have 10 year lithium batteries that do not need replacing every year.
- **Mains powered smoke alarms** also have back-up batteries - check with the manufacturer if your model has batteries that need to be replaced regularly, or whether it has a re-chargeable battery.
- Young children are likely to **sleep through** the sound of a smoke alarm, so **you must alert them** to a fire and help them escape to safety.
- **Installation** of a smoke alarm is quick and easy. Follow the manufacturer's instructions. Generally, because smoke rises, mounting in the middle of the ceiling is recommended.
- **Maximum protection** can be gained from interconnecting smoke alarms - when one smoke alarm operates, all connected alarms will operate.
- All alarms have a **use by date of 10 years**, after this time, the entire alarm must be replaced.

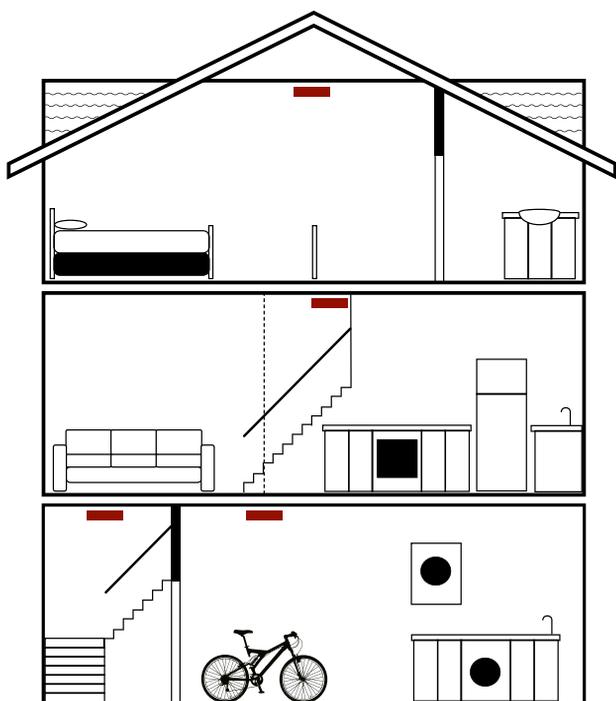


Where best to position your smoke alarms



Single Level Homes

Install a photoelectric smoke alarm in every sleeping area (bedroom), hallway and living area.



Multi Level Homes

Install a photoelectric smoke alarm in every sleeping area (bedroom), hallway, living area and on the ceiling at the top of the stairway connecting the levels.

Important

All smoke alarms must be replaced every 10 years.

Smoke alarms

for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Smoke alarm packages for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing include all the necessary components to give a person a visual and tactile (vibrating) alert to a smoke alarm.

The packages usually consist of three parts:

- A flashing strobe light placed beside the bed. It is connected to a power outlet and has a built in rechargeable battery backup.
- A pillow shaker (connected to the strobe light).
- A smoke alarm.

When the smoke alarm is activated it sends a radio signal, activating the flashing strobe and the pillow shaker.

Note - the smoke alarm still makes loud audible beeps to alert people without a hearing impairment.



Flashing strobe light



Pillow shaker



Smoke alarm

Important

If you require an alarm for the Deaf or Hard of Hearing contact Tasdeaf. You may be eligible for a subsidy.

Phone/TTY (03) 6228 1955 Email: info@tasdeaf.org.au Fax: (03) 6228 1966

Smoke alarms

Rental Properties

From 1 May 2016 ALL smoke alarms in rental properties are required by law to be either mains powered or have a 10 year non-removable battery.

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

Property Owner Responsibilities

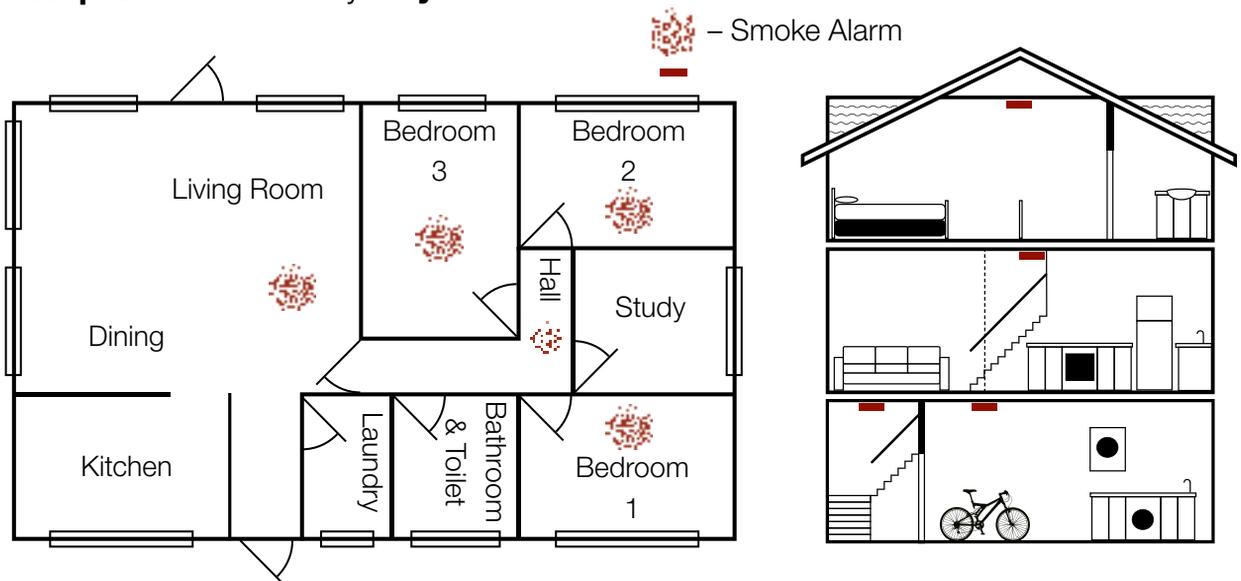
- **Install** either mains powered or 10 year non-removable battery alarms.
- **Clean, test** and ensure all alarms are operating prior to new occupancy.
- **Replace** back up batteries in mains powered smoke alarms.
- **Replace** alarms every **10 years**.

Tenant Responsibilities

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

For further advice

www.consumer.tas.gov.au/renting/smoke_alarms



Generally, in a rental property a smoke alarm must be installed in every hallway near a bedroom and on each level of a multi-storey home. These are minimum requirements and owners are encouraged to install additional smoke alarms to increase the level of early warning for tenants in the event of a fire.

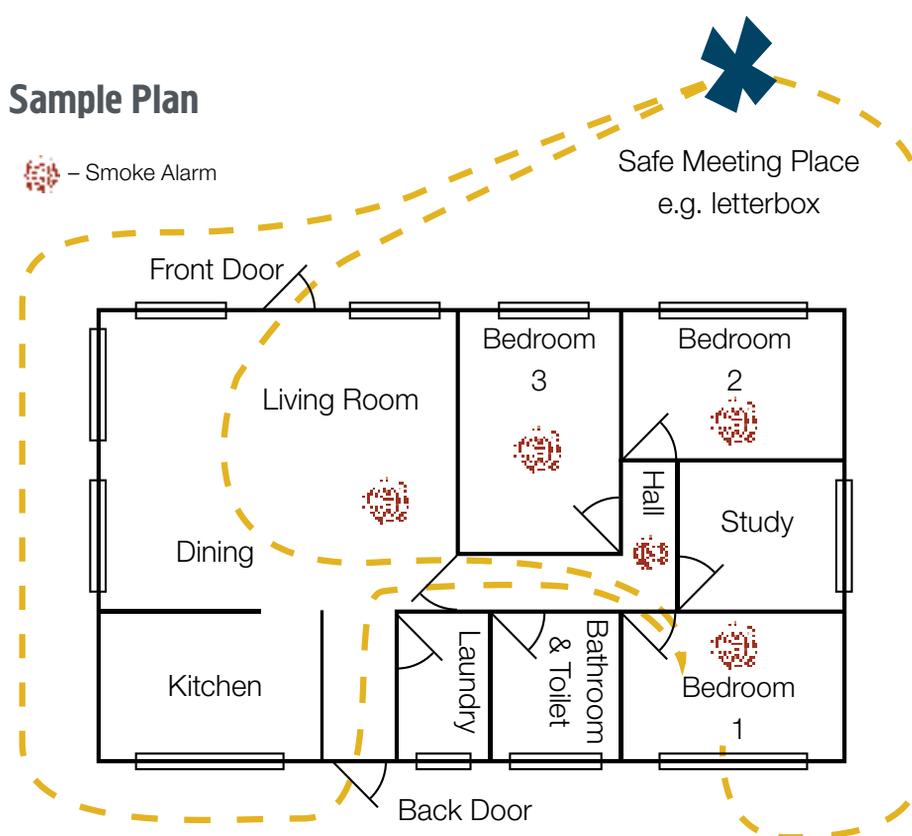
Important

Fire Services **strongly recommend** placing a smoke alarm in each sleeping area (bedroom), hallway, living area and at the top of stairways.

Home fire escape plan

Possibly the most important plan you'll 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. The sample below illustrates a possible plan.



- Make a **home fire escape plan** and **practice** 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.
- Have one **Safe Meeting Place** outside your home (e.g. your letterbox).

Involve everyone in your household in discussing fire safety, what to do and where to go in an emergency.



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.



When you are in the house:

- **Leave keys** in any deadlock, or on a hook close to the door or window, and out of reach of intruders.
- **Make sure** that window security grilles and screens **open readily** from the inside.
- **Make sure** that all windows and doors **open easily** for all members of your family.

What to do in a fire

Do these things to safely escape a fire



- 1. Get down, get low, get out** – smoke is poisonous, get underneath it on your hands and knees, and crawl to the nearest safe exit.
- 2.** Shut the doors behind you to stop the spread of fire.
- 3.** Shout **Fire! Fire! Fire!** to warn others.
- 4.** Ensure **everyone is out** of the building.
- 5. Get out and stay out – never go back inside.**
- 6.** Go to your **safe meeting place** – such as your letterbox.
- 7.** Call **triple zero '000'** from a mobile or a neighbour's phone.
- 8. Wait for the Fire Service to arrive.**

Emergency calls

Call triple zero '000'

- Ask for Fire, Police or Ambulance.
- Stay calm, don't shout, speak slowly and clearly.
- When asked give the:
State you live in, street number, street name, suburb, nearest cross street.



In a fire, **get out, stay out**, call **triple zero '000'** from a mobile or a neighbour's phone.

Important

If you are deaf, hard of hearing or have a speech impairment, the National Relay Service provides six ways to contact emergency services.

If you find yourself in an emergency which is either life threatening or where time is critical, you can contact fire services, police or ambulance:

- By TTY – dial **106**.
- By internet relay – and ask for **triple zero (000)**.
- By captioned relay – and ask for **triple zero (000)**.
- By SMS relay – text **0423 677 767** and include **triple zero (000)** as the number you want to call.
- By video relay – login to Skype and contact one of the NRS contact names.
- By ordinary phone – dial **1800 555 727** and ask for **triple zero (000)**.

For further information visit relayservice.gov.au

Calls to 106 and 000 are FREE 24 hours a day, every day.

Keeping children safe

What can you do?

Supervise and educate your children:

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

- Lock away matches and lighters – just like you lock away medicines and other dangerous household substances.
- 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:

- Lead by example – reduce the risk of fire by using fire, cooking, heating and electricity safely.
- Have working photoelectric smoke alarms in all bedrooms, hallway and living areas.
- 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.

Make a home fire escape plan to get your children out alive:

- Everybody in the house should know what to do if there is a fire – have a family home fire escape plan and practice it at least twice a year.



- Teach your children to **Stop, Drop, Rock and Roll** in case their clothes catch fire:

Stop – put your hands over your face.

Drop – gently drop to the ground.

Rock and Roll – rock and roll back and forth on the ground until your clothes stop burning. This will smother the flames while protecting your face, mouth and lungs from the flames.

Cool a burn

Run cold water over any burns for **at least 20 minutes**.

Do not take off burnt clothes. Burnt clothes should only be removed by medical staff. If the burn is larger than a 20c piece, see a doctor.



Emergency number

Teach your children to dial **triple zero '000'** in an emergency.



Kitchen fire safety

Many house fires start in the kitchen and the majority of all kitchen fires begin from cooking that is left unattended on the stove.

- **Never** leave cooking unattended. **Turn it off before you turn away!**
- **Don't** let fats and oils build up around the stove, they can catch fire.
- Heat oil carefully and **do not overfill** pot or pan.
- **Never** use water, flour or salt to put out an oil or fat fire on the stove.
- **Use** a lid or fire blanket to smother a fire in 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 eg. 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.
- **Leave** immediately if your home catches fire. **Stay out and dial triple zero '000' for help.**

Important

Turn it off before you turn away.



Heating fire safety



- **Don't** place clothing or any flammable material too close to heaters – it should be **at least two metres** from any source of heat.
- **Never** leave clothes near the heater if leaving the house or going to bed.
- **Check** clothing regularly if drying near a heater.
- **Use** fire screens at all times with open fires.
- **Don't** sit too close to the heaters.
- **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.
- Be careful with the **disposal of ashes** from the hearth or wood heater. Ashes can take up to five 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.



Bedroom fire safety

Electric Blankets

- **Switch off** before getting into bed.
- **Switch off** when not at home.
- Keep blanket **flat and tied firmly** to the bed.
- Never use if **wet, soiled or creased**.
- **Do not** use a hot water bottle and an electric blanket together.
- **Do not** place heavy objects on an electric blanket if switched on.
- **Never** fold if storing, as you may damage the wiring.

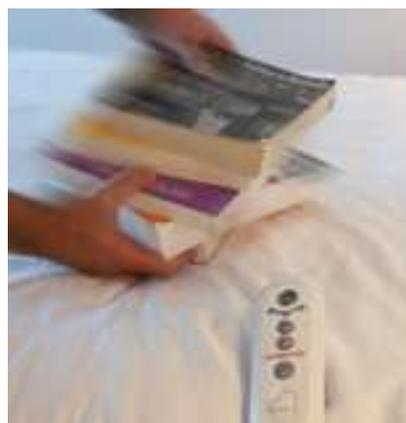
Replace your blanket if it shows any of the following danger signs:

- Frayed or worn fabric or scorch marks
- Exposed elements
- Creasing or folding
- Soiling/damp patches
- Tie tapes damaged or missing
- Damaged electrical cord, plug or controller.

As a final check, switch onto high for 10 - 15 minutes. Run your hand over the blanket to check for hot spots which indicate that the elements may be damaged.

General

- **Don't** smoke in bed.
- **Light globes are hot.** Fit bedside lamps with a compact fluorescent bulb. Don't put material over the lamp.



Laundry/Electrical safety

Laundry

- **Clean** dryer lint filters **before** every use.
- **Ventilate** dryers adequately.
- **Allow** dryers to complete their cool down cycle.
- **Label** flammable liquids and poisons clearly and keep in correct containers.
- **Store** poisons and flammable liquids safely away from children.

Electrical

- **Don't overload power points** or power boards.
- **Replace** damaged plugs and leads.
- **Use** power boards with **overload protection**.
- **Never** handle electrical equipment with wet hands.
- **Switch off and unplug** appliances when not in use.
- **Don't** use faulty electrical equipment until it has been repaired.
- **Don't** place extension leads under carpets or furniture.
- **Install** an earth leakage circuit breaker.
- **Check** electrical wiring and switches regularly, **especially** in older homes. Anything more than a visual check must be done by a licensed electrician.

Further Information

For further information on electrical safety contact:

- Consumer, Building and Occupational Services
Ph: **1300 654 499** or **justice.tas.gov.au**
- TasNetworks
Ph: **13 2004** or **tasnetworks.com.au**



Cigarettes, candles & oil burners

Cigarettes, candles and oil burners can all be dangerous fire hazards:

- **Do not** smoke in bed.
- **Dampen** cigarette butts before putting them in the rubbish.
- Use a **child resistant** lighter.
- **Butt out** in a deep-sided ashtray or metal container filled with sand.
- **Store matches and lighters** out of children's sight and out of their reach.
- **Make sure** your candles are on properly designed candle holders.
- **Don't go to sleep** when a candle or oil burner is alight.
- **Do not** put candles or oil burners near windows - be careful, curtains can catch fire easily.
- **Do not** place lit candles where they can be knocked over by children, pets or anyone else.
- Keep candles **out of the reach** of children and pets.



Fire extinguishers & fire blankets



REMEMBER – Saving lives through a quick escape is far more important than saving property.

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

An emergency is not the time to read instructions.

If you do not know how to use a fire extinguisher or fire blanket:

- 1. Get down, get low, get out** – smoke is poisonous, get underneath it on your hands and knees, and crawl to the nearest safe exit.
- 2.** Shut the doors behind you to stop the spread of fire.
- 3.** Shout **Fire! Fire! Fire!** to warn others.
- 4.** Ensure **everyone is out** of the building.
- 5. Get out and stay out – never go back inside.**
- 6.** Go to your **safe meeting place** – such as your letterbox.
- 7.** Call **triple zero '000'** from a mobile or a neighbour's phone.
- 8. Wait for the Fire Service to arrive.**

How prepared are you for a house

Answer these questions to find out

| | | YES | NO |
|-----|---|-----|----|
| 1. | Do you have smoke alarms in each sleeping area, hallway, living area and at the top of stairways? | | |
| 2. | Do you test your smoke alarms every month ? | | |
| 3. | Do you dust and vacuum your smoke alarms every six months? | | |
| 4. | Do you replace the batteries annually or when the low battery alarm activates? Remember, Change Your Clock, Change Your Smoke Alarm Battery at the end of daylight savings in April. | | |
| 5. | Is your house number easy to see so emergency vehicles can find you? | | |
| 6. | Does everyone know the emergency phone number triple zero '000' ? | | |
| 7. | Does everyone know how to – 'Cover Your Face and Stop, Drop, Rock and Roll' if clothes catch fire? | | |
| 8. | Has your household made and practiced a home fire escape plan? | | |
| 9. | Have you planned one safe meeting place outside? | | |
| 10. | Are the keys to deadlocks kept in or near exits in case you need to escape? | | |
| 11. | Do you always have electrical repairs, alterations or renovations done by a qualified electrician ? | | |
| 12. | Do you avoid overloading power points and power boards? | | |
| 13. | Do you switch off appliances when not in use? | | |
| 14. | Are flammable liquids stored away from heaters, hot water service pilot lights and other naked flames? | | |
| 15. | Is your electric blanket switched off before you get into bed or leave home? | | |

| | | YES | NO |
|--------------------------------------|---|-----|----|
| 16. | Do you always use a fire screen with an open fire? | | |
| 17. | Do you keep clothing, furniture and curtains at least 2 metres away from heaters ? | | |
| 18. | Are matches and cigarette lighters locked away from children? | | |
| 19. | Do you check and clean the lint filter of your clothes dryer before you use it? | | |
| 20. | Does everyone know the cold water first aid treatment for burns? | | |
| Total number of 'yes' answers | | | |

What did you score? Every 'Yes' scores a point.

16 to 20: Well done. You are giving yourself the best chance of protecting your life, your family and your home from a house fire. **Keep it up!**

10 to 15: Not bad. But there are still several things you can do to decrease the likelihood of fire and protect your family.

Less than 10: The potential for fire in your household is dangerously high. **You need to be far more fire aware** and act now to better protect your family and your home.

Your escape plan

Possibly the most important plan you'll ever make.

Design your 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 **practice** at least twice a year.
- **Crawl low** if caught in smoke.
- **Use windows** as an alternative means of escape if safe to do so.
- **Cover** broken glass with a blanket or doona.
- **Once out, stay out** at a safe meeting place outside your home (e.g. next to your letterbox).

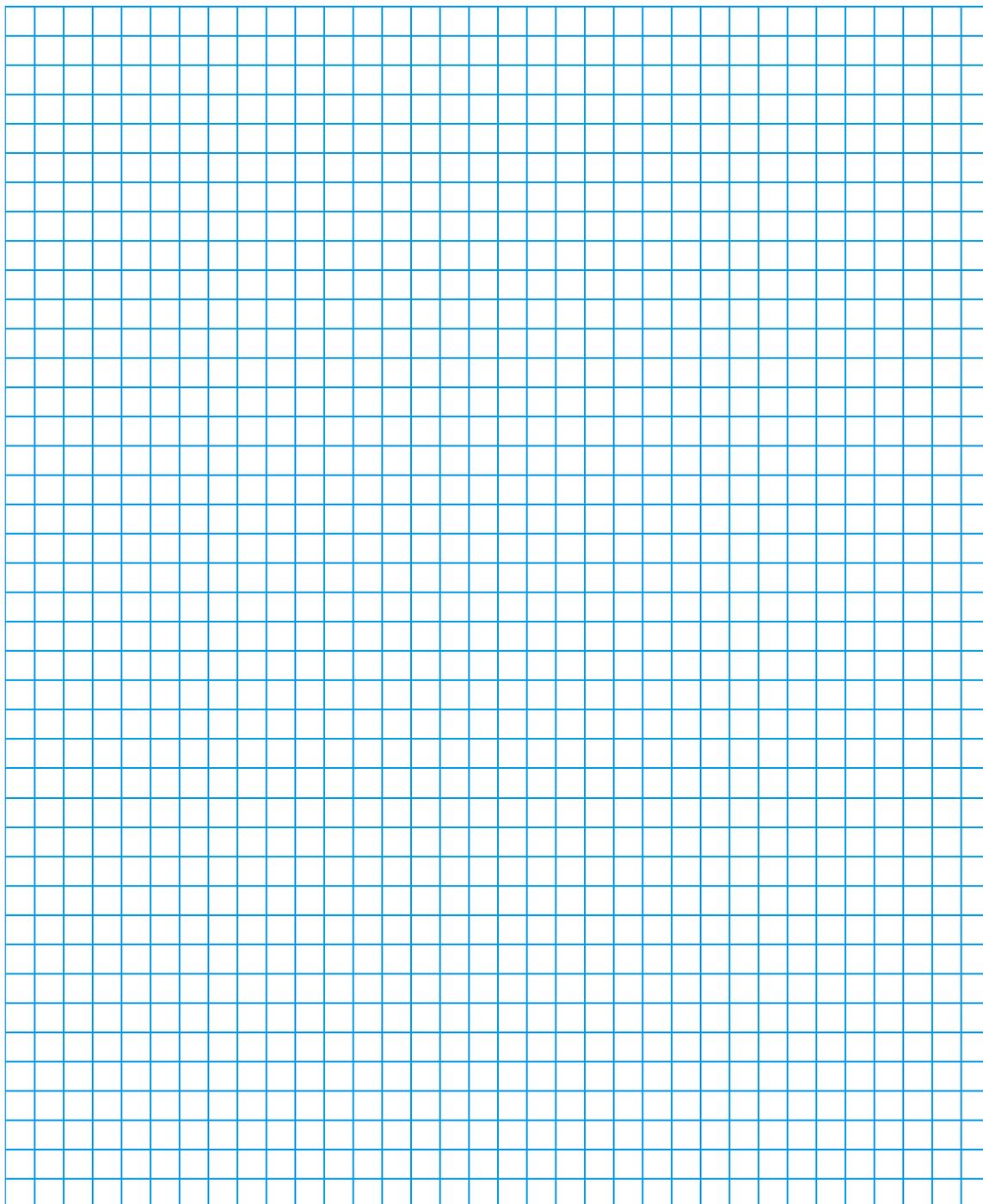
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While deadlocks and security grilles may deter intruders, they can be deadly in a fire.

When you are in the house:

- **Leave keys** in any deadlock, or on a hook (preferably attached to a chain) close to the door or window, and out of reach of intruders.
- **Make sure** that window security grilles and screens open **readily** from the inside.
- **Make sure** that all windows and doors **open easily** for all members of your family.
- If you have **visitors** staying over for the first time, show them your escape plan so they **know what to do** in a fire emergency. Make sure they know where your Safe Meeting Place is located.

Plan your exit from your home. Draw a plan using the grid below and mark in the exits you could use in a fire emergency. Remember to include **two safe ways** out of any sleeping areas to your **Safe Meeting Place**. See page 8 of this booklet for a sample plan.



Detatch your plan and place on your fridge.



Tasmania Fire Service



Tasmanian
Government

Also available: Visual Guide to Home Fire Safety

For further information

fire.tas.gov.au

tfseducation.com.au

Free-call 1800 000 699



TAS ALERT
alert.tas.gov.au

You can also follow us on Twitter and Facebook.



alert.tas.gov.au



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