

Home Heating Safety

Safety tips for heating your home

Home heating is a major cause of house fires in the winter months. Every year accidental house fires cause extensive property loss and damage.

Most home fires are accidental and preventable – you can take action to minimise your risk. The Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) educates people about how to prevent home fires, and individuals have a responsibility to reduce the risk of fires in their own homes.

Appliances

- Fixed heating systems should only be installed by a qualified person
- Heaters should be checked once a year to make sure they are in working order, worn out electrical cords and plugs should be replaced immediately
- All flammable material should be at least one metre away from heaters and open fires
- Electric blankets need to be used correctly so they do not become a fire hazard – Always use and maintain electric blankets in accordance with manufacturer's instructions
- Use only heating appliances that meet approved Australian standards

Flue Fires

Ash and soot can build up on the inside of the flue, which must be removed regularly as it can ignite causing a chimney or flue fire. In most cases, flames can be seen shooting out of the top of the chimney.

- Check the wood heater, fireplace brickwork, chimney and flue before lighting the first fire of the year to make sure it is clean
- Check the surrounding fireplace brickwork for cracks which will allow a fire to creep through
- Flues passing through the ceiling and roof space should have double or triple skins to stop radiant heat igniting roof timbers or insulation
- All wood heaters should be installed and maintained by an experienced business or tradesperson.

It is important for you and your family to develop a Home Fire Escape Plan and practise it regularly

Open Fires

- Open fires should be guarded by a fine mesh screen to prevent sparks and logs rolling out
- Extinguish all flames and embers completely before going to bed or leaving the house
- Never use combustible liquids to light open fires or combustion stoves, use firelighters instead
- Ensure ash is completely cool and no embers remain before disposal.

In the event of a fire

- Crawl low under smoke
- Assist or alert any people in danger, but only if it is safe to do so
- Go to your safe meeting place, such as your letter box
- Call **000** (triple zero)
- Wait for firefighters to arrive
- Do not re-enter a burning house under any circumstances

Never leave children or animals unsupervised near heaters or open fires



For more information visit www.dfes.wa.gov.au or contact **DFES Community Engagement 9395 9816**

