

Sassafras-Ferny Creek Fire Brigade ... Volunteers serving the community

Things to have when your house catches fire

The brutal truth is that far more people die every year in house fires in Victoria than are killed in bushfires over an average decade.

A spate of house fires across Melbourne and in country Victoria earlier this year, some with fatal consequences, was a stark reminder of the need to take care around the home all year.

Most house fires start in the kitchen, with cooking being the major cause. Other causes include faulty wiring or electrical appliances, candles, smoking in bed and heating appliances.

It is important to teach children the danger of fire and to keep matches and lighters away from young children in particular.

There are three essential "haves" to surviving a house fire.

- 1. HAVE A WARNING:** Properly installed smoke alarms are essential ... check them regularly to make sure they work, that batteries are changed routinely and that the alarms are cleaned.
- 2. HAVE A PLAN:** Know what to do when there is a fire. Can it be safely fought by you with a fire blanket or extinguisher? Have an escape plan. Get



everyone out of the house and assembled at an agreed location. Call the fire brigade on 000.

3. HAVE A CLEAR ESCAPE PATH: Getting yourself and your family out is the key priority. Never deadlock doors from the inside – it is pointless as a security measure and puts you and your family in danger. Never re-enter a house once you have evacuated until the fire brigade indicates it is safe to do so.

The CFA has produced an excellent guide to home fire safety. Copies are available free from the fire station or you can read it online at <http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/documents/housefires.pdf>

Sassafras–Ferny Creek Online ... easy information access

It's taken a while, but we've finally made it onto the World Wide Web!

The brigade's web page went live in November and has already become an important way to continuously update our local community with the latest news about the brigade, local fire prevention and preparedness issues and links to some great community safety information available elsewhere on the web.

The website is designed with our community's



needs as first priority, so rather than focus on trucks and fires fought, the emphasis is on helping the community find out how to best prepare your family and property against the threat of fire and other emergencies.

The website is constantly updated with news and fresh information, so take the time to check it out:

www.sassafrascfa.org.au

Brigade wins national community safety award

A bushfire safety booklet produced by the Sassafras-Ferny Creek CFA brigade has won a prestigious national award for promoting community safety.

Living Safely with Bushfire, compiled and published by the brigade, won the pre-disaster category for volunteer organisations in the 2007 Emergency Management Australia Safer Communities Awards.

The award was presented at a ceremony at Parliament House in Canberra in February by Attorney-General Robert McClelland and Minister for Home Affairs Bob Debus. Brigade Captain John Schauble and Secretary Anna-Marie Shew, who jointly devised and produced the project along with designer Francis Bourke, accepted the award on behalf of the brigade.



Briefly ... briefly ... briefly ...

FIRE RESTRICTIONS: CFA fire restrictions end at 1am on March 17th, 2008 in the Shire of Yarra Ranges. Burning off remains subject to shire local laws and Total Fire Bans may still apply. Please take extreme care and consider the wellbeing of your neighbours. www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au

AUTUMN BURNS: The Department of Sustainability has commenced its 2008 autumn burns program in the East Port Phillip district, which includes the Dandenongs. A number of fuel reduction burns are scheduled in the local area. Full details of these will be available on the DSE website www.dse.vic.gov.au/fire

ANNUAL APPEAL: Thank you to all those who contributed generously to our annual brigade appeal. Your donations will be applied to the purchase of new small equipment items, ongoing maintenance of the station and vehicles.

Brigade captain John Schauble, Attorney-General Robert McClelland and brigade secretary Anna-Marie Shew



The EMA awards recognise excellence in the development of initiatives designed to protect Australian communities against disaster.

Mr Schauble said the award signified the importance of gathering and using local knowledge to help communities understand what could happen to them in an emergency such as a bushfire.

The brigade booklet aims to supplement rather than replace the excellent bushfire safety materials freely available from CFA. Publication of the 16-page booklet was made possible through a grant from the NRMA Insurance communityhelp program.

A free copy of *Living Safely with Bushfire* was delivered to every household in Sassafras and Ferny Creek last June. Copies of the booklet can also be obtained from the brigade or downloaded from the brigade website www.sassafrascfa.org.au

Brigade & CFA contacts

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CFA Website: www.cfa.vic.gov.au

Victorian Bushfire Information Line: 1800 240 667

TO REPORT A FIRE, ALWAYS DIAL 000