



SASSAFRAS-FERNY CREEK FIRE BRIGADE

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In case of fire telephone 000

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House fires: a menace all year round

At this time of year, we're understandably very focused on the threat of bushfire to our community.

But in reality, there is probably more chance of your home being destroyed in an "ordinary" house fire. Another brutal truth is that far more people die every year in Victoria in house fires than are killed over an average decade in bushfires.

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

Two homes were totally destroyed in the Dandenongs in one week alone this month.

Just as with bushfire, it is vital to have a plan of action in the event of a fire in your home. Getting yourself and your family out must be the key priority.

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

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

Have working, properly installed smoke alarms ... check regularly to make sure they work, that batteries are changed routinely and that the alarms are cleaned.

- **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**.
- **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>