

safehome checklist



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Introduction

Imagine these scenarios...

Intense heat and thick smoke. It's pitch black and you are half asleep. Could you guide yourself and your loved ones to safety under these conditions?

Lights are out, driving rain, lightning. Where is the torch? How would you and your family cope during and after this type of event?

The following checklist provides you with information on both fire and general safety in your home.

During the Safehome visit, emergency services staff will help you understand the hazards in and around your home and provide you with information on how to eliminate hazards.

As part of the service, emergency services staff will also advise you on correct positioning of your smoke alarms.

Using the checklist, and working together with Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, we can make your home safer, for all those who share its space.



How to use this checklist

For each topic that is relevant to your home, tick the box and be sure to read the associated information.



Don't stop looking
while you're cooking.



Prevention

☒ KITCHEN CHECK

☐ Stove/Oven

Most fires in the kitchen start from cooking, so remember:

- » Never leave your cooking unattended.
- » Clean your oven, stove, top plate and range hood regularly to prevent the build up of grease and fat which could catch fire.
- » Keep tea towels, oven mitts and any other flammable items away from the cooking appliances, including oven door handles.
- » If cooking oil catches fire, DO NOT use water and DO NOT pick up the pot. Instead, turn off the heating source if safe to do so, place the lid on the pot, or use a fire blanket as per instructions on the packaging. LEAVE IN PLACE and call Triple Zero (000). Firefighters will ensure the area is safe.

☐ Dishwasher

- » Ensure that dishwashers have completed their cycle before you leave the house.
- » Make sure dishwashers are in good working order, properly installed and maintained according to the manufacturer's instructions.

☐ Microwave

- » Be sure to take note and follow the manufacturer's installation and operating instructions and safety precautions.
- » Do not use metal items (i.e. metal container, metal foil, twist ties) in a microwave as they can cause arcing which can lead to a fire.
- » Clean the microwave oven regularly to reduce fire potential. Clean the oven cavity and the outer edge of the cavity.
- » If you have a fire in the microwave oven, turn off the oven immediately and unplug the power cord if safe to do so. Never open the door until you are sure the fire is out. Call Triple Zero (000) and ask for Fire.

☐ Other Appliances

- » Toasters have caused a number of fires when they are stored in an appliance cupboard. People in a hurry to go to work push the toaster into the cupboard and pull the roller door down, which impacts on the toaster's on/off lever. With the lever held down the toaster will stay on until it sets the contents of the cupboard on fire.
- » Coffee drip style machines have started a number of fires if left unattended. The heating element will get hotter and hotter if the thermostat jams in the closed position.
- » Slow cookers have been known to cause a few fires due to being left unattended.
- » We strongly recommend that all household appliances are disconnected from the power source/GPO when not in use. Poor house keeping can be the cause of many kitchen fires.





NEVER leave lit cigarettes unattended.

☒ LIVING ROOM CHECK

☐ Air Conditioners

- » Have old or heavily used appliances like air conditioners and fans checked regularly by a qualified tradesperson.
- » Keep appliances clean and free of dust by vacuuming filters regularly.

☐ Heaters

- » Keep all combustible material (e.g. clothes, bed linen, curtains and tea towels) away from heaters and lamps as radiant heat build up can cause a fire.
- » Do not plug high wattage appliances (such as heaters) into power boards as they can overheat the circuit wiring through overload and cause a fire.
- » Do not hang clothes on the heater to dry them out.
- » Never leave your home with heaters left on.

☐ Fireplaces

- » If you have a fireplace, ensure you have the chimney checked annually.
- » Open fires should be screened with a proper fireguard and NEVER left unattended.
- » Dispose of all fireplace ashes safely.
- » Ensure flammable liquids are not used to start an open fire.

☐ Cigarettes & Ashtrays

- » Ensure all smoking materials are properly extinguished.
- » NEVER leave lit cigarettes unattended.
- » Keep matches and lighters out of sight and out of reach of children.

Ensure the correct bulb size and ratings (in watts) are fitted in lamps, according to manufacturer specifications.



☒ **BEDROOM CHECK**

☐ **Lamps**

- » Ensure the correct bulb size and ratings (in watts) are fitted in lamps, according to manufacturer specifications. The incorrect bulb type can overload the internal wiring of the lamp with a potential of starting a fire.
- » In case of an emergency and where there is no power, it is advisable to keep a torch near your bed.

☐ **Candles; Oil Burners and Incense**

- » Take care when using candles or any naked flame and NEVER leave unattended or sleep with the candle still lit.
- » Ensure candles are in suitable candle holders and placed on a suitable fire resistant surface i.e. ceramic/glass plate.
- » There needs to be clear space above the candle i.e. do not place candles under curtains or on Christmas trees.
- » Never spray an aerosol can near a candle.
- » Keep out of reach of children and pets.

☐ **Electric Blankets**

- » Have your electric blanket tested regularly by a qualified electrician.
- » Turn off the electric blanket power, at the control switch, when you get into bed.
- » Do not place heavy objects on the bed while the electric blanket is turned on.
- » Make sure the electric blanket is tightly secured and laid flat on the bed. When not in use, store your electric blanket rolled up, NOT folded.
- » Electric blankets are not recommended for use by babies or young children where “bed wetting” may occur.

☐ **Recharging Devices**

(e.g. mobile phone, laptop, tablet)

- » Don't leave electronic devices such as mobile phones, laptops, tablets, iPods or eReaders on charge or plugged in to charge for extended periods of time. Always keep devices unplugged from main power sources when you leave the home or go to sleep.
- » Recharging devices can generate a large amount of heat; ensure that devices are placed on a suitable fire resistant surface not on beds, couches, etc.



☒ LAUNDRY CHECK

☐ Washing Machine & Clothes Dryer

- » Don't overload past their rated capacity. Check manufacturer's instructions.
- » Ensure there is proper ventilation and air space around the clothes dryer.
- » Remove lint from the clothes dryer filter after each use.
- » Regularly dust the grill at the back of the clothes dryer to prevent dust build up and overheating.
- » Ensure the dryer goes through the full cycle, including cool down.
- » If possible, turn these appliances off at the wall when not in use.

☐ Household Chemicals

- » Store chemicals out of the reach of children.
- » Always follow the directions on the label.
- » Wear appropriate protective clothing. Chemicals can enter the body by swallowing, inhaling and through the skin.
- » Avoid mixing common household chemical products.
- » Store flammable products away from sources of heat such as heaters, elements and BBQs.
- » Dispose of chemicals properly.

Solar systems can pose an electrical safety risk during emergency incidents. Let emergency services staff know if solar panels are installed.



☒ UTILITY CHECK

☐ Gas Supply

- » Ensure you are aware of where gas isolation valves are located in your home. Leaking gas, if undetected and mixed with air, can form an explosive mixture.
- » Have all gas appliances serviced regularly according to manufacturer instructions.

☐ Solar Panels

- » Solar panels are powered by the sun, or any other source of light. They can continue to generate power to the house even if the mains power has been disconnected, or the panels have been turned off at the switchboard.
- » As a result, solar power systems can pose an electrical safety risk during emergency incidents, such as flooding and fires. Ensure emergency services personnel know that solar panels are installed.

☐ Electrical Safety Switch

- » Ensure an electricity safety switch is installed.
- » Electricity safety switches must be installed by a qualified electrician.
- » Test your electrical safety switch every 3 months.
- » Ensure you are aware of the location of your switchboard in your house.



Do not overload double adapters.

☒ ELECTRICAL CHECK

☐ Power Points, Power Boards & Double Adapters

- » Overloaded electrical circuits, faulty equipment and misuse of electrical equipment are common causes of fire and severe burns to the body.
- » Do not overload power boards by connecting double adaptors to them.
- » Place safety plugs into unused power points to prevent accidental contact.

☐ Electrical Leads

- » Ensure that leads on appliances are in good condition and not frayed.
- » Ensure extension leads are not placed under the carpet or rugs, or used while tightly coiled.

☐ Small Appliances

- » Keep electrical appliances clear of water.
- » When buying second hand appliances ensure that they have been tested by a licensed electrician or gas fitter and have been certified safe.
- » Have small appliances like electric blankets, heaters, hair dryers and fans checked regularly by a qualified electrician and serviced in accordance with the manufacturer instructions.
- » Never leave electrical items like hair straighteners unattended. The heating plates on a hair straightener can cause severe burns and potentially cause a fire. Keep out of reach of children.
- » Turn off, and where practical, unplug appliances when not in use.
- » Do not place fans, heaters, laptops, computers, televisions and electrical equipment in areas with restricted airflow as overheating may occur.

☐ Christmas Lights

- » Do not leave Christmas lights on when you go out or go to sleep.
- » Do not leave bulbs touching anything that can burn easily (e.g. paper or plastic decorations).
- » Use only non-flammable or flame retardant artificial trees and decorations.

PREVENTION



☒ SAFETY EQUIPMENT CHECK

☐ Smoke alarms


- » Once a month check the operation of the smoke alarms by pressing the test button. If you cannot reach the button easily, use a broom handle.
- » Clean (broom or vacuum) over and around all smoke alarms regularly. Smoke alarms must never be painted.
- » Replace removeable batteries, if applicable, annually. In most models when batteries are low the detector will sound a short 'BEEP' every minute or so. This is your reminder to replace the battery.
- » Failure to maintain your smoke alarm may lead to continued unwanted activations.
- » If cooking smoke sets off the alarm, do not disable it. Turn on the range fan, open a window or wave a towel near the alarm until the alarm stops beeping. Or use the hush button (if fitted).
- » If unwanted alarm activation persist when cooking, consider relocating the smoke alarm or change the range fan to exhaust externally.

☐ Fire blankets

- » Fire blankets stored for easy retrieval yet away from areas likely to catch fire. For example, locate the fire blanket near the entrance to the kitchen not near the stove.
- » Ensure you read and follow the manufacturer's instructions located on the front of the cover.

☐ Fire extinguishers

- » A Dry Chemical Powder (AB(E)) fire extinguisher is suitable for most household fires due to its effectiveness against most types of fires.
 - » Fire extinguishers stored for easy retrieval yet away from areas likely to catch fire. For example, locate the fire extinguisher at the entrance to the kitchen, not inside the kitchen.
 - » Monitor the pressure gauge to ensure correct pressure.
 - » Shake it occasionally to prevent the powder from settling.
 - » Ensure you read and follow the manufacturer's instructions.
 - » Contact your local council for information on disposal options.
-



Clear rubbish and other combustibles
from the yard and around the house.

☒ OUTDOOR CHECK

☐ Street/driveway

- » Clear of overhanging vegetation and power lines.

Acreage

- » Unrestricted gate access and able to reverse in.
- » Turning/passing areas for vehicles.
- » Heavy vehicle access on cattle grid/bridge.
- » Alternative way out.
- » Two-wheel drive access.

☐ Structure/s

- » Roof ridge capping sealed.
- » Eaves enclosed.
- » Roofing gutters and valleys clear of debris.
- » Underfloor enclosed.
- » Vents screened.
- » Windows screened/shuttered to prevent embers from entering during a bushfire.
- » Deck/veranda spaces sealed to prevent embers from dropping underneath these areas during a bushfire.

☐ Water supply

- » Reticulated water supply
- » Tank supply with QFES access – 50 mm male camlock fitting so firefighters can use water if needed
- » QFES accessible external open water supply (dam/pool)
- » Firefighting pump and hose connected to water supply

☐ Yard

- » Ensure your house number is clearly visible during the day and night.
- » Fires can start by embers collecting in crevices, scrub, or dead leaves on or near the house.
- » Clear rubbish and other combustibles from around the house.
- » Clear overhanging trees and shrubs situated close to the house, power lines and eaves.
- » Keep eaves and downpipes clear of leaves and debris.
- » Locate your street hydrant and ensure it is accessible to firefighters if ever required.
- » Have a garden hose that can reach all areas of the house when connected.



NEVER put flammable liquid on a BBQ.

☐ **Garage & Shed**

- » Garages and sheds often contain fire safety hazards. Have flammable liquids and other products stored in appropriate containers.
- » Keep the shed securely locked.
- » Ensure your shed has adequate ventilation.

☐ **BBQ**

- » BBQs are potentially dangerous if not used correctly. Ensure you regularly check and maintain BBQ fittings and connections.
- » Ensure there is adequate clearing around the BBQ when in use.
- » Never put flammable liquid on a BBQ.
- » Once you have finished cooking, isolate the BBQ to prevent burns.
- » Remove all residual fat from the BBQ after each use.
- » Always store gas bottles outside, upright and away from sources of heat.
- » Supervise children at all times when using a BBQ.

☐ **Balconies**

- » When using a barbeque maintain a safe distance of 50cm from exterior walls, anything else that could burn, as well as any electrical ignition sources.
 - » Smokers should use heavy, high-sided ashtrays (made of glass, ceramic or metal) to prevent them tipping over. Always fully extinguish cigarettes.
 - » Remove clutter from balconies and keep air conditioning units clear of any flammable items.
-

Always plan two ways out of each room.

Toxic smoke and fire spread rapidly, which makes a quick exit from the home vital.



Evacuation

☒ PLAN AHEAD CHECK

☐ Fire Escape Plan

- » Make sure that everyone knows the sound of the smoke alarm and what to do if it sounds.
- » Ensure doorways are not obstructed; it is easier to manoeuvre in low visibility if the escape routes are as clear as possible.
- » Identify a primary escape route out of each room, then pick a secondary route in case the first is blocked by fire (see next page).
- » Prioritise exiting the building then make the 000 call.
- » Select and indicate a meeting place outside of the house (e.g. the letterbox).
- » Remain calm and if possible close doors behind you, as this will provide you some extra time.
- » Be prepared to smash a window as a means of escape. Use a solid object to break the window, clear away jagged glass or use padding to protect your body against cuts and injury.

☐ Security

- » Install deadlocks that can be opened from the inside without keys.
- » Store any security grill keys and door keys in a central location, known to all occupants for faster escape.
- » Limit the number of keys needed to open doors by having locks keyed alike.
- » When installing security grills on windows, select a unit that features keyless options on the inside.

☐ Important Documents

If you experience a major fire in your home, in some instances, it will be very difficult to regain your lifestyle.

Ensure you have important documentation available in one contained area for easy access in the event of an emergency.

These documents may include:

- » Identification
- » Legal documents
- » Insurance papers
- » Medication scripts
- » Personal valuables.



Emergency Contacts

Queensland Fire and Emergency Services:

IN AN EMERGENCY, CALL TRIPLE ZERO (000)

- › If the situation is not an emergency, call **13 QGOV**
- ✦ For general enquiries visit, www.qfes.qld.gov.au
- ✦ Fire bans and restrictions visit, www.ruralfire.qld.gov.au

Queensland Ambulance Service:

IN AN EMERGENCY, CALL TRIPLE ZERO (000)

- › If the situation is NOT an emergency, call **13 QGOV** (7468)
- ✦ or visit, www.ambulance.qld.gov.au

Queensland Police Service:

IN AN EMERGENCY, CALL TRIPLE ZERO (000)

- › For general enquiries, call PoliceLink **13 14 44**
- ✦ or visit, www.police.qld.gov.au
- › Crime Stoppers: **1800 333 000**

State Emergency Service (SES):

- › Flood and storm assistance, call **13 25 00**
- ✦ or visit, www.ses.qld.gov.au

Health and Hospital Information:

- › **13 HEALTH** (13 432 584)
- › Poisons Information: **13 11 26**

Energex:

- › To report dangerous electrical emergencies, call **13 19 62**
- › To report faults or loss of supply, call **13 62 62**

Ergon Energy:

- › To report dangerous electrical emergencies, call **13 16 70**
- › To report faults or loss of supply, call **13 16 70**

Telstra:

- › Faults & damage: **13 22 03**

Road Traffic and Travel Information:

- › **13 19 40**

TransLink:

- › For public transport information, call **13 12 30**

Schools:

- ✦ For information on school closures, either contact your children's school directly or visit the Education Queensland website, www.education.qld.gov.au

In an emergency, call Triple Zero (000)

Fire | Ambulance | Police

Insurance

Do you have adequate insurance cover for your home building and contents?

An NRMA Insurance Survey found that one in ten Australian households do not have home buildings or contents insurance. One in ten households stated they knew they were underinsured for their contents and one in three that they did not know if their contents cover was sufficient to cover all of their belongings.

If faced with the total loss of your home, insurance cover will give you the financial platform to rebuild.

INSURANCE TIPS

- » Make an accurate calculation of what it would cost to rebuild your home and replace your contents in today's market.
- » Check your sum insured to make sure all your belongings are covered. Don't just include large or expensive items such as furniture and televisions – include ALL your contents, such as clothing, linen, kitchenware, art and toys.
- » Regularly review your sum insured particularly if you renovate your home or buy new furniture or appliances.
- » Take photos of valuable items and keep proof of purchase receipts to make replacement easier.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Contact your insurance company to find tools which may help you estimate the rebuilding costs for your home and the value of your contents. There are also apps available that can help catalogue your valuable items for insurance claims.

THINGS TO DO:

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

NOTES

In an emergency, call Triple Zero (000)

Fire | Ambulance | Police

GET DOWN LOW AND GO GO GO

The air is much cleaner and cooler, and visibility is clearer close to the floor

STOP DROP AND ROLL

Remember, if your clothing catches fire, cover your face with your hands, then STOP still, DROP to the floor and ROLL over so that your body smothers the fire.

GET OUT, STAY OUT

Re-entering a burning house puts your life in danger.
Never go back into a fire.

safehome

Call: 13 QGOV (13 74 68)

