

Fire safety in your home 2018



MISSION
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we stand

Did you know?

If a fire starts in your home you may have as little as 2 minutes to escape.

During a fire, early warning from a working smoke alarm plus a fire escape plan that has been practiced regularly can save lives.

Learn what else to do to keep you and your loved ones safe!



8 top tips for fire safety in your home



-  **Never tamper with your smoke alarm.** Always call Mission Australia Housing if you think your smoke alarm may be faulty.
-  **Teach children** what smoke alarms sound like and what to do when they hear one.
-  **Ensure everyone in your home knows the way to escape** from every room of your home and know the family meeting spot outside your home. In larger residential complexes a fire evacuation plan will detail escape routes and meeting places.
-  **Make sure everyone in your home knows who to contact** if they cannot find one another in an emergency.
-  **Practice escaping** from your home at least twice a year.
-  Make sure everyone knows how to **call 000**.
-  **Teach household members to stop, drop and roll** if their clothes catch on fire.
-  **If a fire occurs in your home, get out, stay out and call for help.** Never go back inside for anything or anyone.

Why are smoke alarms so important?

Under Australian laws, all residential property owners, including Mission Australia Housing, must comply with federal electrical and fire safety regulations. The laws say that all residential property owners must install smoke alarms. Mission Australia Housing employ licensed tradesmen to make sure we meet our legal obligations.

Smoke alarms make a loud noise if the detector identifies smoke in your home. This alarm gives you time to escape your home.

Contact Mission Australia Housing if you believe your smoke alarm is faulty or not working.



Regular smoke alarm testing

Mission Australia Housing is committed to the protection of our tenants and our properties.

To meet our legal compliance obligations all smoke alarms require regular maintenance and testing.

Every year Mission Australia Housing will conduct smoke alarm testing on the smoke alarms in your home.

Under the Residential Tenancy Act, you will be notified in writing of the time and date of testing. **It is important that you provide us access at this time.** If you cannot be home at this time, please organise for a friend or relative to provide access.

This is for your safety, as well as the safety of others in your building.

If you are not home at the time of the **first annual smoke alarm testing**, you will be given a **Final Notice to Comply**. You will need to arrange for this testing to happen **within 2 days** of receiving the Final Notice to Comply. If this does not happen Mission Australia Housing staff will use our office keys or get a locksmith to gain access to your property (at your cost) to conduct the testing.

If you tamper with your smoke alarm and it becomes faulty **you will be charged for any repairs** that are required. More importantly, you could be putting your life and the lives of other residents at risk. When your tenancy comes to an end you must leave your property and smoke alarm in a similar state to when you moved in.

Never deactivate or interfere with your smoke alarm!





Protect and educate your children

A home fire is a devastating event, and one that you never think might happen. Your children are most at risk if a fire occurs.

Tragically, many home fires are started by children playing with dangerous household

items – especially lighters and matches. Taking some sensible actions in the home and teaching your children how to escape from a fire can help your family avoid this type of heartbreak.



Children under 5 years of age are twice as likely as other people to die in a home fire.

Protecting your pets from potential danger

The best way to protect your pets from fire is to include them in your family escape plan. This includes having their own disaster supplies kit and arranging for a safe place for them to stay if you need to leave your home.

When you practice your escape plan, practice taking your pets with you. Train them to come to you when you call.

If you must evacuate, the most important thing you can do to protect your pets is to evacuate them too.



Remember! Never delay escape or endanger yourself or your family to rescue a family pet.

Cooking safely



NEVER:

- ✘ Leave cooking unattended. If you must leave the kitchen, turn off the stove or appliance.
- ✘ Cook with the pot handles hanging over the edge of the stove. They can be accidentally knocked off.
- ✘ Allow pets on cooking surfaces and counter tops.
- ✘ Leave things that can catch fire lying around the stove (e.g. pot holders, oven mitts, tea towels, curtains, bags, and other appliances).
- ✘ Move a pan that has caught on fire. This may cause serious injury or spread the fire. Instead, slide a lid over the burning pan and turn off the burner. Leave the lid in place until the pan is completely cool.
- ✘ Pour water on grease, fat or oil fires. Water can make the fire spread rapidly and cause serious burns. When cooking with oil – heat oil slowly!
- ✘ Carry pans of hot or burning oil through the house as this may spread the fire.
- ✘ Use gas rings, camp stoves or BBQ heat beads in your home. These are very dangerous as they can leak and explode.

Microwave safety



NEVER:

- ✘ Heat articles that are not approved for use in microwave ovens.
- ✘ Use metal, metal edged bowls, metal foil or even twist ties in microwave ovens.
- ✘ Dry or sterilise clothes or blankets in microwave ovens.
- ✘ Use recycled paper in microwave ovens unless they are approved for microwave use. Recycled products, including paper towels, have tiny metal flecks. These can spark and cause flames.
- ✘ Heat wheat bags longer than the manufacturer's instructions and never more than 3 minutes.

Popcorn is fun to make and eat with the kids but it can also be dangerous! Always heat according to instructions.



Electrical safety

MAKE SURE:

- ✓ All electrical items in the home are in good condition at all times. This also includes decorations like Christmas lights.
- ✓ A qualified electrician fixes or replaces frayed extension cords, exposed wires, or loose plugs.
- ✓ You service or remove any appliance from the property that trips your electricity supply.
- ✓ You purchase only appliances and electrical devices (including heaters) that have an independent testing laboratory label and from a known outlet that has a good reputation for fire-safe products.

NEVER:

- ✗ Tamper with electrical wiring in your home.
- ✗ Overload electrical outlets or extension cords i.e. plugging one power board in to another. This can cause a power short and turn in to a fire.
- ✗ Use electrical appliances for the wrong reasons. If in doubt, refer to the instructions for the item.
- ✗ Place wiring under rugs, attached with nails.
- ✗ Have exposed wiring and make sure electrical outlets have cover plates.



Heating

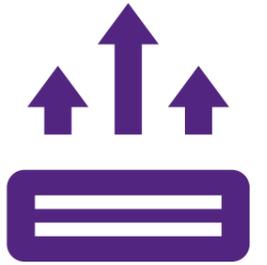
Heaters are essential for our cold winter climate in Australia. However, many home fires are started by poorly maintained heaters, as well as faulty stoves and kitchen appliances.

MAKE SURE:

- ✓ Heaters are at least 1 metre away from furniture, curtains and blinds, etc.
- ✓ Heaters are clean and working properly.
- ✓ You turn portable heaters off when you leave the room or go to sleep.
- ✓ You replace your electric blankets every few years as they may become faulty.

NEVER:

- ✗ Use heaters to dry or warm clothes or towels.
- ✗ Leave children unattended around heaters.
- ✗ Use any outdoor heaters inside.



Important notice

You will need to provide Mission Australia Housing access to your property once a year to check the residual current device (RCD) in your property.

This will be the same time your smoke alarm is tested. An RCD, is a life-saving device which is designed to prevent you from getting a fatal electric shock if you touch something live, such as a bare wire. It can also provide some protection against electrical fires.

Please contact Mission Australia Housing maintenance for any electrical work required. You are not allowed to do any electrical works yourself. All work must be completed by a qualified and approved Mission Australia Housing contractor.

For any electrical work contact us on:

P: 1800 269 672

E: maintenance@missionaustralia.com.au





Housekeeping

General housekeeping within the home is important to you and your family's health and safety. Keeping your property clean, inside and out, and reporting all repairs is a key part of your tenancy agreement. It is as important as paying your rent and can reduce the risk of fire.



MAKE SURE:

- ✓ You keep your home clean and store food items correctly. This will reduce cockroaches coming in to your home. Cockroach infestation can affect your smoke alarms from working properly.
- ✓ Materials that can easily catch fire are stored in open areas and away from heaters, stoves, toasters etc.
- ✓ Rags used to apply household chemicals are thrown out.

NEVER:

- ✗ Remove house/unit numbers. These need to be easy to read from the street for emergency services.
- ✗ Block doorways and exits with furniture or other items. Doorways and exits should be free of hazards so you and your family can quickly get out and emergency services can quickly get in.

It is the law that all doors including emergency exits must be kept clear and accessible at all times.

Rubbish in and around your home

House rubbish and any other unnecessary items in your house can cause a fire to spread.

If the emergency services have to come into your home to rescue you, your child or your pet, a build-up of household items and/or rubbish could stop them from doing this.



Who is in your home?

It is important that the only people living in your home are those on your tenancy agreement. **Properties are not to be overcrowded.** This can cause major health and safety issues, especially in an emergency.

Smoking

You are not allowed to smoke in any part of your home. Smoking is permitted on private balconies, courtyards and gardens provided it does not interfere with the comfort of other tenants.

Smoking is not permitted in any part of enclosed common areas including hallways, stairwells, lifts and entrances.



Smoking is also not allowed within 4 metres of entrances to buildings.

BBQs and outdoor fires

Mission Australia Housing **does not allow the use of BBQs** on balconies unless these are compliant, well maintained, well clear of flammable materials and located and operated in accordance with any published building rules.

Mission Australia Housing **does not allow the lighting of outdoor fires**, such as fire pits, within any property (indoors or outdoors). This includes common areas such as gardens in unit complexes.

For your enjoyment and safety, we have installed community BBQ areas in most of our sites or housing communities. It is our responsibility to maintain these BBQ's but it is your responsibility to keep BBQ's clean and used correctly. Please follow all instructions displayed in the BBQ area and **contact Mission Australia Housing immediately** if you think the community BBQ may be faulty.

Drying clothes

Drying clothes on heaters is not allowed.

Items can easily set alight from the heat. If you have a clothes dryer please ensure you remove the lint build up regularly. This build up can cause a fire so it is a good idea to remove the lint each time you use it.

Tenants will be held responsible for fires that have been caused through negligence. For example, leaving cooking unattended, from smoking or using candles.

Candles

Mission Australia Housing does not recommend the use of candles in the home. You can buy flameless candles that are also good for outdoor use. These candles have a light bulb rather than an open flame and take the danger out of your child or pet knocking over a candle.

If your power goes out **do not use** a candle. Have a torch handy at all times!



Doors

Mission Australia Housing does not allow tenants to install chains or deadlocks.

You are not allowed to alter, remove or add any lock or security device on any doors. This is a condition of your lease.

Door closers should not be removed.

These help to stop fire from spreading by automatically closing the door behind you if you are leaving your home in a hurry.



It is an offence, under various state legislation¹, to install chains or remove door closers. You could be fined up to \$18,000 if you do this!

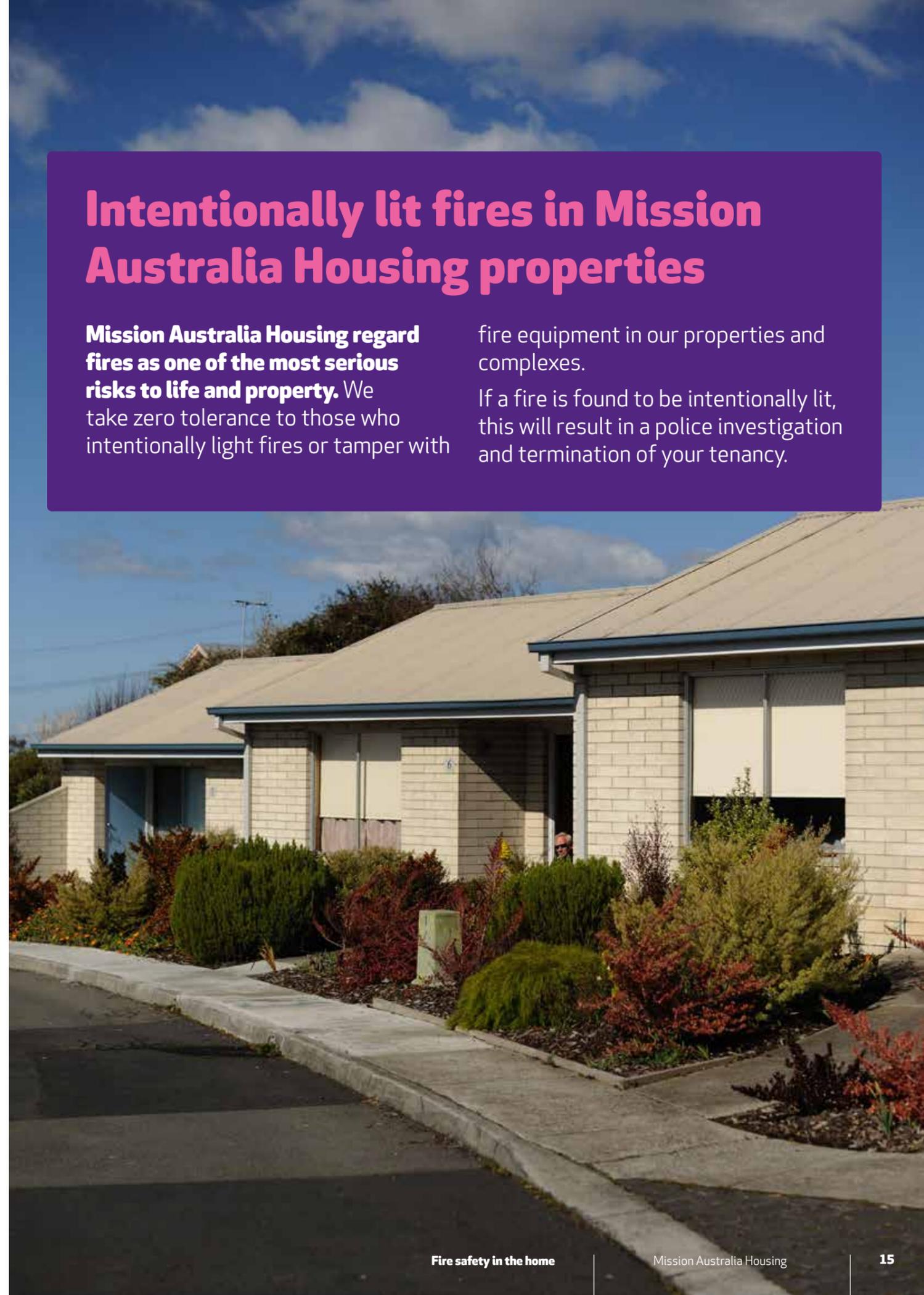
¹ NSW Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979, QLD Building Fire Safety Regulation 2008, TAS General Fire Regulations 2000

Intentionally lit fires in Mission Australia Housing properties

Mission Australia Housing regard fires as one of the most serious risks to life and property. We take zero tolerance to those who intentionally light fires or tamper with

fire equipment in our properties and complexes.

If a fire is found to be intentionally lit, this will result in a police investigation and termination of your tenancy.



Did you know?

- 1.** Fire is a chemical reaction that releases light and heat.
- 2.** Fires require fuel, oxygen and heat to burn.
- 3.** A typical house fire can double in size every minute.
- 4.** A low oxygen fire is yellow in colour. A high oxygen fire is blue in colour.
- 5.** Fires can be stopped in 3 different ways:
 - Removing the fuel source by exhausting it or taking it away.
 - Removing the oxygen by smothering the fire.
 - Removing the heat by absorbing it with water (not on oil fires).
- 6.** Spontaneous combustion is real! Some fuel sources can make their own heat - by rotting and bursting into flames (e.g. compost heaps, piles of old newspapers and magazines).
- 7.** During bushfires, trees can explode if water deep inside the tree quickly turns to steam.
- 8.** No one knows who invented the fire hydrant, because its patent was destroyed in a fire in 1836.
- 9.** Bush fires move faster uphill than downhill. The steeper the slope, the faster the fire travels.
- 10.** Once a bush fire begins, it can spread up to 25 kilometres per hour, consuming everything in its path.
- 11.** Back in the day when horses pulled fire engines, fire stations had spiral staircases so the horses would not try to climb the stairs into the living quarters. You may still find some stations with these stairs today!

Contact us



1800 269 672



maintenance@missionaustralia.com.au