

Elevated fire risk checklist

For disability and aged-care service providers of in-home care and support



This checklist has been developed for in-home providers to help identify and reduce fire risks. The risk factors in this checklist are considered the **highest risk factors**. However, this is not a comprehensive list of all home fire risk factors.

For more information go to www.cfa.vic.gov.au/atrisk.

Risk	Is this a risk?	Ways to mitigate
<p>No working smoke alarms</p> <p>This could look like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• when tested it does not sound• they are over 10 years old• they look discoloured (yellow) or cracked• batteries removed from smoke alarm.	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Work with your client to help them understand the importance of working smoke alarms.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Install working smoke alarms that are suitable to the person's needs. For example, smoke alarms for deaf or hard of hearing and/or smoke alarms linked to personal alarm devices.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Follow the Smoke Alarm Referral Pathway for more support.</p> <p>Notes:</p>

Risk	Is this a risk?	Ways to mitigate
<p>Smoking inside</p> <p>Did you know more than a third of all fatal home fires are started by smoking materials such as cigarettes.</p> <p>Smoking in bed is a life safety risk and has been the cause of many fatalities.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> If a client wants to stop smoking direct them to their GP to discuss smoking cessation options.</p> <p>If people smoke:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Provide high sided ashtrays or contained ashtrays and ensure they are regularly emptied.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Establish a designated smoking area, ideally outside, but if inside, consider covering soft furnishings with a pure wool blanket, and installing welding mats on the floor around the area.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> If smoking in bed, provide flame retardant linen and a pure wool blanket instead of synthetic bedding.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Follow the Home Fire Risk Reduction Referral Pathway.</p> <p>For further advice refer to Smoking and Home Fire Safety fact sheet.</p> <p>Notes:</p>

Risk	Is this a risk?	Ways to mitigate
<p>Unable or slow to self-evacuate (especially if living alone)</p> <p>If a fire was to start inside the home, residents need to be able to get out within 3 minutes.</p> <p>If they cannot get out and have no assistance, this is a very dangerous situation.</p> <p>If in a bushfire risk area this can also be a very dangerous situation.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Have a personal alarm linked to the smoke alarm.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Have smoke a smoke alarm in the bedroom, preferably interconnected to the rest of the home smoke alarms.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Keep a mobile phone close by and ensure it is always charged.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Relocate the bedroom closer to an exit to help firefighters find them more easily.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Have an exit out of the bedroom to the outside. For example, some people have changed a window to a sliding door.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Complete the Home Fire Escape Plan for People at Higher Risk with the client.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Prevent the chance of fires starting inside – follow Home Fire Safety Checklist.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Follow the Home Fire Safety Risk Reduction Referral Pathway.</p> <p>If in a bushfire area:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Complete the Bushfire Survival Plan with the client.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Prepare the property based on CFA’s Your Guide to Property Preparation.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Follow the Bushfire Planning Referral Pathway.</p> <p>Notes:</p>

Risk	Is this a risk?	Ways to mitigate
<p>Hoarding or excess clutter</p> <p>Hoarding, or clutter blocking exits or around cooking or heating appliances can increase the risk of a fire starting.</p> <p>Once a fire does start the amount of fuel available to burn can make the fire grow very rapidly. It may be difficult for residents to escape due to the clutter.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Move clutter away from exits and from sources of heat, such as the stove, or heater.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Install extra smoke alarms.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Notify FRV or CFA using the Hoarding Referral Pathway, and if required complete a Hoarding Notification.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Due to the life safety risk of hoarding, support providers do not need to gain consent from the resident to report the risk to fire services.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Extra advice about hoarding from DFFH Hoarding and environmental neglect - DFFH Service Providers.</p> <p>Notes:</p>

Risk	Is this a risk?	Ways to mitigate
<p>Fire-lighting behaviour, previous fires or near misses</p> <p>Deliberate fire-lighting, fire-play, or burning-off rubbish can easily lead to an uncontrolled fire.</p> <p>Having had a previous fire at home, or near misses is also an indicator that a person may be at increased risk.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Discuss the behaviours of concern with the person, discuss why it is unsafe, and what safer alternatives could look like.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Consider if specialist psycho-social intervention is needed, to help manage and reduce concerning behaviours.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Install smoke alarms in all bedrooms and living areas.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Write and practice a Home Fire Escape Plan for People at Higher Risk with the client.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Support may be available through the Firelighting Consequence Awareness Program (Fire-CAP) Fire Rescue Victoria.</p> <p>Notes:</p>

Risk	Is this a risk?	Ways to mitigate
<p>Unsafe cooking practices</p> <p>Signs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a history of leaving cooking unattended or forgetting about cooking • pots or pans that are severely scorched • burn marks in the kitchen or benches • a cluttered cooking area • inappropriate cooking appliances such as butane cookers or gas barbeques used indoors • a build-up of grease or fat around the stove or rangehood. 	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Install stove cut-off devices or timers to remind people they are cooking or remove power to the stove entirely.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Consider meal preparation support as part of in-home support provision and use a microwave to heat.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Initiate meal provision service.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Initiate a home cleaning service.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Follow the Home Fire Risk Reduction Referral Pathway.</p> <p>Notes:</p>

Risk	Is this a risk?	Ways to mitigate
<p>Unsafe use of gas or electrical appliances</p> <p>Signs (outside the kitchen) include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use of heaters to dry clothing • use of bar heaters close to flammable items • use of any un-flued gas appliance indoors • electric blankets kept on continuously, especially while a person is in bed • overloading of power boards or excessive use of extension cords • collecting electrical appliances from hard rubbish • using appliances that are very old, worn out, or have frayed cords. 	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Support the person to purchase new appliances.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Remove unsafe appliances from the home.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Make sure clothes and other flammable materials are one meter from the heater.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Work with the client to support them to access home fire safety information.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Follow the Home Fire Risk Reduction Referral Pathway.</p> <p>Notes:</p>

Risk	Is this a risk?	Ways to mitigate
<p>Bushfire risk – Client lives in a Bushfire Management Overlay</p> <p>People living in a Bushfire Management Overlay (BMO) area are at higher risk of being impacted by a bushfire. If they live close to a forested area their risk increases.</p> <p>Organisational procedures need to be in place to support the client to have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a bushfire plan to leave early • a well-prepared property. <p>Clients living in a Bushfire Prone Area should also have a leave early plan, especially for Catastrophic and Extreme Fire Danger Rated days.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> A workable Bushfire Survival Plan is in place that is communicated and understood by the client, support services, family, and any other supports.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The property is prepared based on CFA's Your Guide to Property Preparation.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Contact CFA to request a property visit or for further advice.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Follow the Bushfire Planning Referral Pathway.</p> <p>Notes:</p>