



Keeping Children

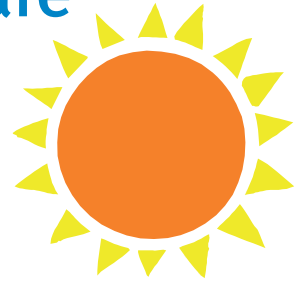
Safe



Queensland  
Government



# Keeping Children Safe



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# Introduction

The information and advice contained in this booklet is offered as a guide by the Department of Emergency Services to enhance safety for children.


The booklet also provides details about a number of community safety programs offered by the department to reduce the risk of injury and to improve the ability of those caring for children to respond to emergencies.

If children are in your care, it is important that you:

- supervise them;
- provide a secure and safe environment;
- make sure all possible safety precautions are taken;
- have first aid equipment available; and
- be aware of what to do in an emergency situation.

**In an emergency, the number to phone is triple zero (000).**





An emergency includes anything that threatens the well-being of you or those in your care. Some of the most common emergencies are fires, accidents and medical emergencies.

If you need assistance from fire, police or ambulance in the event of an emergency, phone triple zero (000). If phoning triple zero (000) from a mobile fails, phone 112.

The operator will ask you which service you require. This will be either fire, police or ambulance.

If calling from a mobile you may be asked which city and state you are calling from. The operator will transfer you to the appropriate communications officer.

It is important that you provide clear and accurate answers to these questions.

## Department of Emergency Services

The Department of Emergency Services provides ambulance, fire and rescue, emergency management and hazardous materials services to all Queensland communities.

The department incorporates the three operational divisions of Queensland Ambulance Service, Queensland Fire and Rescue Service and Emergency Management Queensland.

As well as responding to emergencies and disasters, the department aims to develop the skills and knowledge of the community to prevent, prepare for and lessen the effects of emergencies and disasters. The department achieves this through community safety programs and initiatives.

For more information, visit the department's website at [www.emergency.qld.gov.au](http://www.emergency.qld.gov.au)

# Community Safety Initiatives

The Department of Emergency Services offers initiatives to the community to improve safety generally and to reduce injury. Some of the department's key community safety initiatives are summarised below.

For more information, visit [www.emergency.qld.gov.au](http://www.emergency.qld.gov.au) or phone the Queensland Government on **1300 369 003** for more details on the relevant initiative.

## First Aid Training

First aid training prepares you to respond to an emergency and provides a vital link in the chain of survival for the sick and injured. The Queensland Ambulance Service offers all levels of first aid training ranging from a basic resuscitation course to a comprehensive first aid course.

To learn more about first aid, you can attend classes at locations throughout Queensland. Courses can also be tailored to your specific needs. It is recommended that first aid certificates are renewed every three years.

Book online at [www.ambulance.qld.gov.au](http://www.ambulance.qld.gov.au)



## Baby Capsule Hire Service

The Queensland Ambulance Service provides a simple and economical baby capsule hire and fitting service. The hirer can be confident knowing the capsule is correctly fitted by trained staff and the risk of injury to the child is greatly reduced. The service also offers a **child restraint fitting and checking service** for people who have purchased child restraints. This service provides parents and carers with peace of mind knowing the restraint is correctly fitted.

## Community Fire Ed Presentations

These presentations discuss important home fire safety issues and provide simple advice on how to reduce the risk of fire in your home. Presentations can be personalised to community groups and incorporate visual aids to enhance and reinforce community safety messages. Presentations are by local fire crews with the expertise and experience to help you make your home a safer place.



## Safehome

Safehome is a free service delivered by firefighters designed to help identify fire and safety hazards around the home. Advice is provided on fire prevention, smoke alarms, escape plans and other important home safety issues. As part of the visit a Safehome Pack containing a checklist for future reference and other safety information to assist in resolving any identified issues is provided.

## Safety in and around the Home

Some of the major causes of injury to children in and around the home are burns/scalds, falls, poisonings and drownings. As a result of some of these accidents, you may need to call an ambulance. If you have a medical emergency call triple zero (000).

## Conscious or Unconscious

In the event of an unconscious child call triple zero (000) for an ambulance.

To check if a child is conscious ask, 'Are you OK?' (use the child's name if you know it), 'Squeeze my hand; now let it go'. Grasp and squeeze the child's shoulders firmly.

If there is no response or you have concerns about the child's well-being call triple zero (000) for an ambulance. You will receive advice on how to care for the child while the ambulance is on its way.



In an emergency call triple zero (000)

# Drownings

Drownings account for a quarter of the child injury deaths in Queensland. Drowning is the most common cause of traumatic death in children under five and 50% of these deaths occur in domestic swimming pools. For more details on child injury, visit the Queensland Injury Surveillance Unit website at [www.qisu.org.au](http://www.qisu.org.au)



Householders with children in their care should be aware of the following:

- Pools should be fenced. Ensure the fence is properly maintained and pool gates are self-closing and self-locking. Always use the latch. Never prop the gate open.
- Do not install fishponds or fountains. If there is an existing pond or fountain, cover with a metal grille and fence all ponds and fountains (in accordance with pool fencing requirements – [www.poolfencing.qld.gov.au](http://www.poolfencing.qld.gov.au)).
- Display a resuscitation chart on your pool fence (charts are available at [www.ambulance.qld.gov.au](http://www.ambulance.qld.gov.au)).
- Lids should be kept on nappy buckets.
- Baths, basins, sinks, paddling pools and troughs should be emptied immediately after use.
- Children have drowned in toilets – keep the toilet lid closed and allow entry to the toilet only when supervised.
- Always supervise children when they are in or around water.

If a child is immersed in water and stops breathing, call triple zero (000) and request an ambulance, then start cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

If you are caring for children it is recommended that you learn CPR.

## Poisonings

We use and store many products in our homes that are potentially harmful to children. Most accidental poisoning resulting in hospitalisation occurs in the home.

If a child swallows a poison, do not induce vomiting or wait for symptoms to occur. **Call triple zero (000) first and then the Poisons Information Centre on 13 11 26.**

**Poisons include:**

- drugs and medicines, e.g. paracetamol, prescription medicines;
- cleaning products, e.g. detergents, bleaches, drain cleaners;
- cosmetics, e.g. perfume, nail polish remover;
- common household items, e.g. petrol, alcohol, cigarettes, glue, weed killer, rat/mouse bait; and
- poisonous plants, e.g. Oleander, Datura, Deadly Nightshade.

For more information about types of poisonous plants, visit [www.health.qld.gov.au/PoisonsInformationCentre](http://www.health.qld.gov.au/PoisonsInformationCentre)

Chemicals should be stored securely out of sight and reach of children. They should be stored in a cupboard with a child-resistant latch.

All products should be kept in their original containers and clearly labelled.



# Choking

Toddlers are at risk from choking on food and small items, such as buttons, beads and nuts. In the event of a choking child, call triple zero (000) for an ambulance. This is a life-threatening emergency.

If the child is conscious (can speak and can exhale through the mouth or nose but is having difficulty breathing), calmly reassure the child and encourage them to cough up the cause of the obstruction.

Signs of choking include clutching at the throat and an inability to cough, speak or breathe. If the blockage is not removed, the child may turn blue and lose consciousness.



*Back blow*

If the cause of the choking is visible, carefully remove it with your fingers. If you cannot remove it, give a sharp blow to the back, in an upward motion, between the shoulder blades with the heel of the hand (where the hand joins the wrist). Check to see if the obstruction has been dislodged. Repeat this process up to five times.

If this does not dislodge the obstruction place the child on to their back. Find the centre of the child's chest and give up to five sudden sharp pushes.

These are known as chest thrusts. The aim is to try to dislodge the obstruction with each chest thrust rather than give all five chest thrusts.

If the obstruction has not dislodged, continue alternating five back blows with five chest thrusts.

If the child stops breathing, commence cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

## Burns and Scalds

In the event of an emergency, call triple zero (000) for an ambulance.

A scald is a burn injury caused by hot liquid, hot vapour or steam. For young children, scalds are commonly associated with hot drinks, water being boiled for drinks, cooking, hot food and hot tap water.

When a child is scalded, every second counts. Treat the scald immediately under cool running water for 20 minutes. Never use ice, oil, butter or ointments as these can damage the skin further.



Young children love to explore, touch, climb and grab, but do not understand dangers like hot water or hot drinks. Here are some ways to keep them safe from burns and scalds:

- Control the temperature of your hot tap water to a maximum of 50°C. This temperature is compulsory for new homes under the plumbing code. Your licensed plumber can tell you how best to achieve this water temperature in older homes.

- Always stay with children when they are in the bathroom. Take them with you if you have to leave the room.
- Keep hot drinks out of reach. Place them up high and use non-slip placemats placed towards the centre of tables.
- Do not pass hot drinks across children.
- Use placemats instead of a tablecloth.
- Use child gates or other barriers to prevent children from coming into the kitchen.
- Cook on the back hot plates and keep handles turned away from the edges of the stove.

For more information on prevention of scalds and burns phone Kidsafe Queensland on (07) 3854 1829 or visit [www.kidsafe.com.au](http://www.kidsafe.com.au) Further information is available through Queensland Health at [www.health.qld.gov.au](http://www.health.qld.gov.au)

## Falls

In the event of an emergency, call triple zero (000) for an ambulance.

From the time a child can roll, crawl and climb there is a risk of injury caused from falls. Depending on the height of the fall and the landing surface, a fall can result in bruises, bumps and scratches and in more serious cases broken bones, fractures and head injuries.

Falls are a common part of growing up but there are things that child carers can do to help prevent serious injuries.

- Install barriers where necessary to prevent children from climbing and falling from stairs, balconies, porches, terraces, landings and climbing out of windows.

- Never leave babies alone on a bed, bench or change table.
- Encourage children to put toys away.
- Don't use baby walkers.
- Install guard-rails and a fixed ladder on bunk beds.
- Place non-slip devices in areas that are commonly wet to prevent slipping, such as the bathroom floor.

## Children with Asthma

In the event of a severe asthma attack, call triple zero (000) for an ambulance. This is a life-threatening emergency.

Signs of a severe asthma attack include difficulty in breathing and the inability to speak in complete sentences.

- If a child you are caring for has asthma, it is recommended that you are aware of how to treat day-to-day asthma, what to do when asthma symptoms deteriorate and how to carry out asthma first aid in an emergency.
- If a child in your care is an asthmatic, make sure you know the location of their medication at all times. Always take the medication with you if you are taking the child outside. It is important that both you and the child know how to administer the medication.



In an emergency call triple zero (000)

# Sleeping Safely

The cause of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) is not known. However, the risk of SIDS can be reduced by following simple rules to ensure a baby sleeps safely.

To sleep a baby safely always:

- Sleep the baby on their back from birth and never on their stomach or side.
- Sleep the baby with face uncovered.
- Keep the baby smoke-free before and after birth.
- Provide a safe sleeping place for the baby.

If sharing a sleep surface with an infant:

- Make sure the mattress is firm.
- Make sure that bedding cannot cover the infant's face.



Move pillows, doonas and any other soft items away from the baby.

- Place the baby at the side of one parent, not in between two parents as this will increase the likelihood of the baby becoming covered by adult bedding.
- Do not place pillows at the side of a baby to prevent rolling off. A safer alternative is to place the adult mattress on the floor.
- To eliminate the need for bedding in the bed-sharing environment, an alternative may be to use an infant sleeping bag so that the baby does not share the adult bedding.

Sleeping with a baby on couches, beanbags, waterbeds or sagging mattresses, or leaving a baby alone in an adult bed, is dangerous and should be avoided at all times.

## Safety in the Driveway

Low-speed run-over is the third most frequent cause of injury death for toddlers (1–4 years) in Queensland. Sixty per cent of vehicles involved were reversing at the time. Two-thirds of the deaths occurred at the victim's home and the driver was most frequently a relative or family friend (54%) – [www.qisu.org.au](http://www.qisu.org.au)

In the time it takes for the driver to say goodbye and start the car, a child can move from a 'safe' position onto the driveway and into the path of a moving vehicle. Small children cannot be seen from inside a car, especially if they are directly behind.



Here are some safety tips:

- When in the car know where children are.
- Always supervise young children and do not leave them alone to play, especially when they are near parked or moving vehicles.
- Don't let children use the driveway as a play area; create safe play areas.
- Drivers should walk around their vehicle before leaving an area where children may have been. If you are the only adult at home and need to move a vehicle, place the child securely in the vehicle with you while you move it.

## Sun Safety


Playing in the sun for extended periods of time may cause problems such as dehydration, severe sunburn and, in the longer term, skin damage and skin cancer.

- Encourage children to play in the shade.
- Use hats and clothing to provide protection from the sun.
- Use an SPF 30+ broad spectrum water-resistant sunscreen.
- Ensure that children have an adequate intake of water.



## Heat-related Illnesses

During periods of prolonged extreme heat, babies and children are more susceptible to heat-related illnesses than adults as their bodies cannot adapt to changing temperatures as easily. Children also have a lower capacity to sweat, compared to adults, and this reduces their ability to lose body heat by evaporation.



As babies and children are completely dependent on adults to supply their essential needs such as drinks and suitable clothing, it is important that adults identify climatic conditions in which heat-related illnesses are likely, and take precautionary measures.

- Ensure that children drink plenty of water.
- Keep children inside or in the shade during the hottest part of the day (10am to 3pm).
- Avoid direct sunlight on a baby's skin for the first 12 months.
- Make sure you use a suitable sunshade on your baby's stroller and baby capsule.

## Hot Cars

Never leave a child alone in a parked car. On a typical Australian summer day, the temperature inside a parked car can be as much as 30°C to 40°C higher than the outside temperature. The risk of leaving a child inside a car includes dehydration, heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Heat stroke can lead to death.

- Even when you leave the car for a short time, take children with you. Seventy-five per cent of the temperature rise occurs within as little as five minutes.
- Provide plenty of cool water to children in the car.
- Cool down your car as much as possible before placing children in the car.

## Dog Bites

Any type of dog can pose a risk to children and babies. Dog bites tend to occur more frequently when children are interacting directly with a dog – e.g. patting, playing and feeding. Always ensure that you supervise children around dogs.

Children should be taught the following:

- Do not approach an unfamiliar dog.
- Never run from a dog and scream.
- Do not disturb a dog that is sleeping, eating or caring for puppies.

For information on prevention of dog bites, visit [www.kidsafe.com.au](http://www.kidsafe.com.au)

In the event of an emergency, call triple zero (000) for an ambulance.





## Play Equipment

Play equipment should be placed over a soft fall surface with a recommended two metre fall zone around it. Regularly check play equipment for wear and tear.

- Ensure there are no sharp edges and corners that can injure children.
- Always supervise children when they are using play equipment.
- Don't place play equipment near pool fencing.

For more information on creating safer playgrounds visit [www.kidsafe.com.au/kidsafeplay/](http://www.kidsafe.com.au/kidsafeplay/)

# First Aid Kits

First aid kits should be available in the home and the car. There is an extensive range of first aid kits designed to meet specific needs. Child carers should ensure all first aid kits are restocked regularly and are appropriate for their needs.

For information on first aid kits supplied by the Queensland Ambulance Service, and a list of recommended items, visit [www.ambulance.qld.gov.au](http://www.ambulance.qld.gov.au)




## Being Prepared

Emergency contact numbers should be kept handy and include triple zero (000), numbers for your doctor, dentist, local council, State Emergency Service (SES), gas and electricity company, friends and relatives who you may need to contact in an emergency.

If you live in an area that is prone to natural disasters you should develop an Emergency Plan and prepare an Emergency Kit. An Emergency Kit is a collection of items that you will need in case of storms, floods and cyclones.



The only number to phone for SES assistance following a storm, flood or cyclone is 132 500.



An **emergency kit** should be kept in a sturdy, easy-to-carry bag or storage box. Items in your kit should include:

- battery-operated radio (with spare batteries);
- torch (with spare batteries);
- candles and waterproof matches;
- first aid kit and manual;
- strong plastic bags for clothing and other items;
- a waterproof bag for valuables;
- copies of important family documents;
- extra car and house keys; and
- list of emergency contact numbers.

Other items required in your emergency kit for disasters such as floods, storms and cyclones include:

- medications, toiletry and sanitary supplies;
- special needs for infants, the aged and people with disabilities;
- spare clothes and sleeping equipment, including strong shoes, broad-brimmed hat, leather gloves and sunscreen for each household member;
- a mobile phone, spare battery and charger; and
- food and water supplies.

If you are caring for children outside your home, ensure you know where a first aid kit is located. You should also have a list of relevant emergency contact numbers.

For more information about additional items for your emergency kit, visit [www.emergency.qld.gov.au/emq](http://www.emergency.qld.gov.au/emq)

# Fire Safety

Every year people die as a result of fires in their homes. Most fatal fires occur at night when people are asleep. Fatal fires are usually accidental and preventable. Here are some precautions you can take to protect yourself, those in your care and your home.

## Smoke Alarms

Smoke alarms detect smoke and sound an alarm. Smoke alarms will alert and wake you and the children you are caring for, allowing valuable time to get out of a home during a fire. When you go to sleep, your sense of smell also goes to sleep. If there is a fire, toxic fumes may overcome you and those in your care before you wake up.



- When caring for children, ensure they know the sound of the smoke alarm and what to do if the alarm sounds.
- Check the smoke alarm is operating. Press the test button on the smoke alarm. If you cannot reach the button easily, use a broom handle. In most models when batteries are low the alarm will sound a short ‘beep’ every minute or so. This is a reminder to replace the batteries. Smoke alarms require 9-volt batteries.
- Check that children’s bedrooms have a smoke alarm, as children sleep more deeply than adults.

## New Smoke Alarm Laws

From 1 July 2007 all homes and units throughout Queensland must be fitted with working smoke alarms. The Queensland Fire and Rescue Service recommend the installation of photoelectric smoke alarms.

For more information phone Smart Service Queensland on 1300 369 003 or visit [www.fire.qld.gov.au](http://www.fire.qld.gov.au)

## Fire Safety Products

There is a range of fire safety products on the market that can help prevent and respond to fires. Fire blankets and fire extinguishers can assist in putting out a minor fire. The Queensland Fire and Rescue Service recommends you consider these products for your particular circumstance. If in doubt, consult a reputable fire protection company.



## Home Security

People have died in fires because they have deadlocked themselves in their home and removed the key from the lock.

- Ensure you know where all keys are kept in the event of an emergency.
- If keys are needed, leave the key in the lock or on a hook on the centre of the door, out of reach of potential intruders.
- Check with the owners to see whether doors are keyed alike. This may limit the number of keys needed to open doors.
- If you are in a home with security grilles on windows, check to see whether they can be opened from the inside. If grilles are key locked, ensure the key is readily accessible.
- In the event of a fire, be prepared to smash a window as a means of escape. Use a solid object to break the window and clear away jagged glass to protect yourself and children against cuts. Use a blanket or rug to cover any sharp edges.

## Basic Fire Tips

There are precautions you can take to reduce the risk of a fire in the home.

- In households where you are caring for children and there are smokers, never leave lit cigarettes unattended. Ensure that all smoking materials are properly put out.
- Keep matches and lighters out of reach of children.
- Electric blankets are not recommended for use by babies or young children as ‘bed-wetting’ may occur.
- Candles and children are a dangerous mix. If you use candles, never leave them unattended.
- Do not overload power boards with double adaptors.
- If you need to use the clothes dryer, remove lint from the clothes dryer filter before each use and ensure the dryer goes through the full cycle, including cool down.
- Have a fire extinguisher, fire blanket and smoke alarm in easily accessible places.





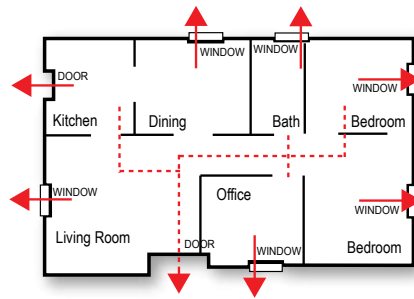
# Escape Plan

In a fire, you will have only one to two minutes from the sounding of the alarm to when life is seriously threatened by fire or smoke. It is important that you prepare and practise an escape plan, and that everyone in the household knows what to do in an emergency.

Draw your escape plan in the tear-off grid on the reverse side of this page. Place the plan where people will see it.

- Start with a floor diagram of the home.
- Plan escape routes. Identify a primary escape route out of every room and then pick a secondary route in case the first is blocked by fire (always plan two ways out of each room).
- Make sure doorways are not obstructed.
- Select and mark a meeting place outside of the home (e.g. the letterbox).
- Practise your fire escape plan regularly – at night, with the lights off.
- Make sure that everyone knows the sound of the smoke alarm and what to do if a fire occurs.

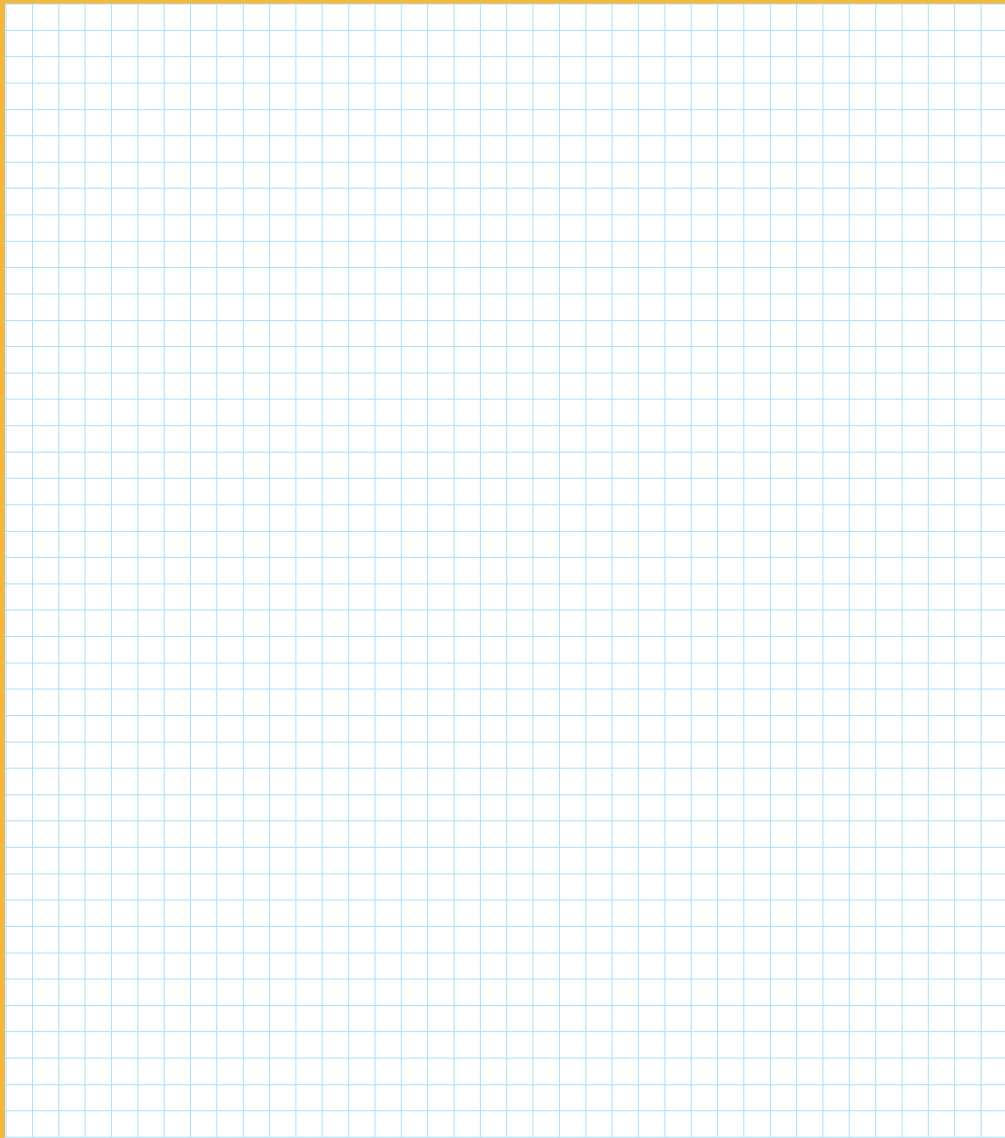
Here's an example of a plan:



In the event of a fire you should:

- Check closed doors for excessive heat before opening (use the back of your hand).
- Crawl low (smoke and heat will build from the ceiling down).
- Close doors behind you as you exit (this helps to limit the spread of fire and smoke).
- Call triple zero (000) from a neighbour's home or mobile phone.
- Account for all people in the house.
- Do not return to the house.
- If anyone is missing, tell the fire service.

# My Fire Escape Plan



Place this plan where your family will see it.



In an emergency call triple zero (000)

# Safety Hints

- Child carers and children they are caring for should know the triple zero (000) emergency number and how to use it.
- Child carers should have a current first aid certificate and access to appropriate fully stocked first aid kits.
- Child carers should ensure children in their care are supervised at all times, when indoors and outdoors.
- Play equipment and toys should be maintained in good order and be free from hazards.
- Heating appliances, electrical cords, poisonous products, medications and sharp objects should be secured out of reach of children.
- The home should be fitted with smoke alarms and other fire safety equipment.
- The home should have a plan for the safe evacuation of children in the event of fire or other emergencies.

The information and advice contained in this booklet is offered as a guide only for people caring for children in places such as private homes. If you are looking after children as part of a business, or in a specialist care centre, you need to obtain professional advice on government requirements. For general enquiries regarding this booklet, phone the Queensland Government on 1300 369 003 or visit [www.emergency.qld.gov.au/publications/](http://www.emergency.qld.gov.au/publications/)

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