



Victorian Burns Prevention Partnership

A partnership of:



# Stay Safe

Burns Prevention Newsletter

2012 | Issue 2 | Summer Edition

## Summer fire safety

If you live, work or travel anywhere in Victoria this summer, you may be at risk of bushfire and you need a well thought out Bushfire Survival Plan. Even in urban areas there are some properties that are at risk from grass, scrub and bushfires.

During the summer fire season firefighters are giving special attention to properties in high risk areas so householders better understand their risks and preparation requirements for this summer. Even if your home is not in a bush area you need to consider grassfires. Grassfires should not be underestimated; they can be extremely dangerous and cause death, trauma and/or serious injury.

Planning ahead can save you and your family from fire. You will need to know what to do, and when and where to go on hot, dry, windy days. Victoria's FireReady app can be downloaded via CFA's website. This App delivers critical emergency information and community safety advice to smartphone and tablet devices.

Of course, as articles in this edition of Stay Safe reveal, fire is not the only cause of burns.

Make sure you and your family stay safe this summer.

## Know your fire risk: it could save your life



**With summer upon us, fire authorities are urging all Victorians to take the time to be informed and understand their local conditions and fire risk.**

CFA Chief Officer Euan Ferguson warned Victoria is one of the most fire prone places in the world and understanding your individual risk could be the difference between life and death this summer.

"Risk is unique to you and your home – it depends on factors like where you live, your local weather conditions, the amount of vegetation nearby, how prepared you are for fire, your physical and psychological capability and more," he said.

"It's up to each Victorian to know how a fire could impact them and their property. Make decisions and prepare a comprehensive plan now so you're ready and know what to do if fire does threaten."

A visit to the CFA website [cfa.vic.gov.au](http://cfa.vic.gov.au) (and MFB's website for urban grassfires in Melbourne, [mfb.vic.gov.au](http://mfb.vic.gov.au)) or calling the Victorian Bushfire Information Line on **1800 240 667** are also great places to start planning for the event of fire.

In CFA areas, the fire brigade offers a personalised Home Bushfire Advice Service - one-on-one bushfire safety advice delivered at your property by trained Fire Safety Officers.

"Through the service, residents learn about their level of bushfire risk, fire hazards on their property and how to manage them, and how to develop a bushfire survival plan so they know what to do on high-risk fire days," Mr Ferguson said.

"Clear your property and plan what you'll do if it's a hot, dry, windy day when the risk of fire is high. It could just save your family's life." He said.

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# SunSmart

A teaspoon isn't the first thing that comes to mind when you think about sun protection in the summer months to prevent sun burn and skin cancer.

But that's exactly what Australian families – and men, women and children of all ages – should be thinking about when applying their sunscreen this summer.

The average-sized adult should apply more than half a teaspoon of sunscreen to each arm and the face/neck (including ears), and just over one teaspoon to each leg, the front of the body and the back of the body.

Proper sun protection is so important, says SunSmart Manager Jen Makin, because Australia has one of the highest rates of skin cancer in the world.

Every year, nearly 1,900 Australians die from skin cancer. Two in every three Australians will get some form of skin cancer before the age of 70.

Ms Makin says while sunscreen is important, there are other protective measures people should take as well.

"For the best skin protection, use sunscreen to cover the skin that is not already protected by clothing, a broad brimmed hat and sunnies, and stay in the shade wherever possible," Ms Makin says.

## These tips are part of the SunSmart message:

1. **Slip** on sun-protective clothing – long sleeve, light coloured jerseys or white arm covers with a UPF 50+ rating can be both cooling and UV protective.
2. **Slop** on SPF30+ sunscreen and reapply every 2 hours
3. **Slap** on a hat – that protects your face, head, neck and ears (note that baseball caps don't provide good protection).
4. **Seek** shade – find a shady spot to spectate.
5. **Slide** on some sunglasses – make sure they meet Australian Standards.

Cancer Council Victoria research also shows that Australian children are 16 times more likely to use sunscreen and six times more likely to use two or more sun protection behaviours if their parents do too, compared with parents who do not perform the same behaviours.

"Given that sun exposure during childhood can play an important part in the development of skin cancers later in life, the role modelling of SunSmart behaviour by parents is crucial to setting up good sun safe habits," said Ms. Makin.

Ms Makin says skin protection is extremely important but it is not the only thing people need to do to be protected from skin cancer.



With the warmer weather often meaning people cover up less, mums and dads should be aware of what's normal for their skin and have any unusual moles or changing spots checked by a health professional.

"Skin cancer is one of the most preventable of all cancers – over 95 per cent of skin cancers can be successfully treated if found early so getting familiar with your skin is very important," Ms Makin says.

Ms Makin says no matter what their age, all Australians need to be SunSmart – but it was particularly important for men and women from age 50 on to heed the warnings.

"Two-thirds of Victorians diagnosed with melanoma are aged 55 or older. We know that sun protection at any age decreases the risk of skin cancer, so it is really important to be SunSmart," she says.



Ms Makin adds sun protection is not just relevant on hot, sunny days during summer.

"Just because the weather is overcast, does not mean people don't need to be SunSmart, the UV levels can still be high and lead to sunburn and skin damage," she says.

**Check the daily sun protection times (when the UV is forecast to be 3 or above and sun protection is required). Download the free SunSmart app by visiting [www.sunsmart.com.au](http://www.sunsmart.com.au) or check the weather section of the daily newspapers.**

# Burns from motorbike exhaust pipes

**Children enjoy having a ride or just simply sitting on a motorbike and there are an increasing number of children who own and ride small 50cc motorbikes or trail bikes.** During the summer months it is tempting to let children ride these bikes without protective boots and clothing. Many people are unaware of the potential injury that can be sustained when skin comes into contact with a hot exhaust pipe. This often leads to children as young as six months sustaining burn injuries from the hot exhaust pipes of these bikes. Adults are also at risk of a burn from a hot exhaust pipe if protective gear is not worn.

A burn will occur if a child falls off the bike and the exhaust comes in contact with the skin or when the child simply touches the exhaust. The most common area of the body that is burned is the lower leg but a child playing around a motorbike who reaches out to touch the shiny exhaust pipe will burn their hand. Contact burns from exhaust pipes are usually painful and full thickness in depth. The injured area will often require skin grafts to heal and will scar. Children require long term follow up after a skin graft, to monitor for any functional impairment and may even require further surgery.



## Burn injury in children across Australia & New Zealand

**The Australian & New Zealand Burns Association (ANZBA) recently published its second annual report for the period July 2010 – June 2011 profiling burn injuries across the two countries.** The ANZBA

Bi-National Burns Registry (Bi-NBR) collects epidemiological, quality of care and outcome data on paediatric and adult burns patients admitted to specialist burns units in Australia and New Zealand. The report can be accessed via the ANZBA website at [www.anzba.org.au](http://www.anzba.org.au).

Scald burns account for 55 per cent of burn injuries seen in children under 15 years old. 78 per cent of these injuries occurred in the home, 36 per cent occurred when the child was playing and 28 per cent occurred when the child was near someone who was preparing or cooking food.

**Based on these statistics we would like to reiterate a few key burns prevention messages:**

- Do not carry a child on your hip, or nurse a baby or small child whilst cooking, drinking hot drinks or heating a baby's bottle.
- Always turn saucepan handles away from the edge of the stove.
- Always make sure that all hot liquids (including coffee, tea, noodles and soup) are well out of reach.

- Tempering devices can be installed by your plumber to regulate the temperature of hot water to 50°C throughout your home.
- Never leave a child unattended where a hot water tap is on or accessible.
- Always test the bath water before putting the child in.
- Where possible, when running a bath, avoid running the hot water tap on its own.
- Never leave a child unattended in the kitchen or bath.
- Always strain the hot liquid off microwaved noodles before serving to a child.
- Cook on the hotplates at the back of the stove.
- Install an oven and cook top guard.
- Always test children's food that has been heated before giving it to them.
- Put campfires out with WATER not sand/dirt.
- Supervise children around camp/bonfires.
- Always keep matches and lighters out of reach of children.
- Do not throw flammable liquids on fire.
- Be cautious when lighting a gas BBQ or cook top.
- Ensure you always follow safety guidelines for flammable substances.
- Ensure your treadmill has guards fitted to protect hands from getting caught underneath.
- Never use a treadmill when there is a small child around.



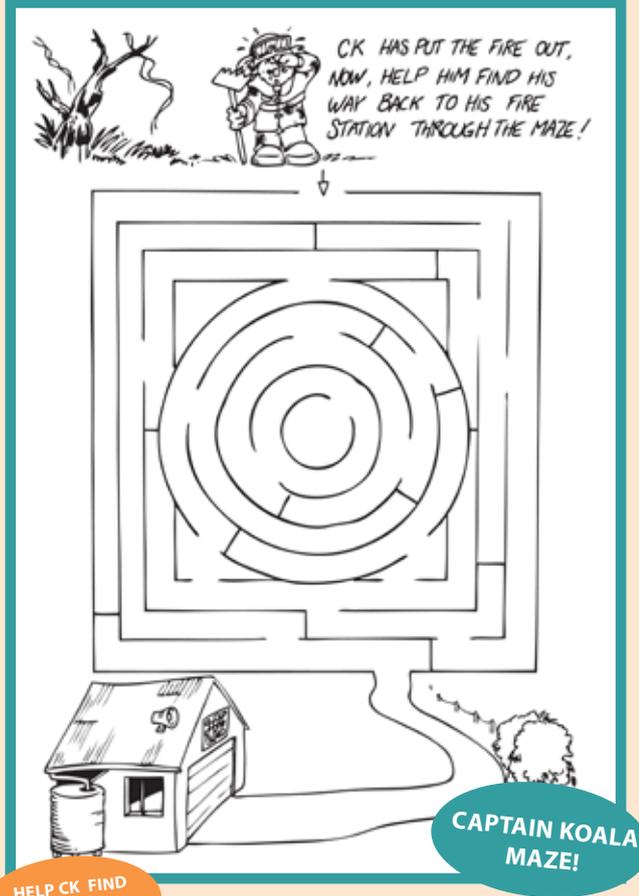
# Stay Safe

## ACTIVITY PAGE

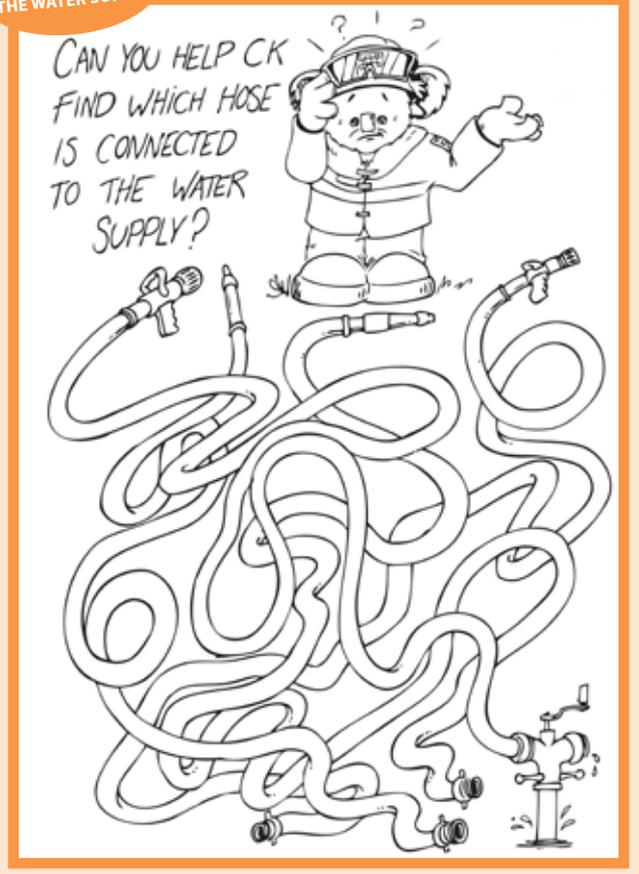
### CAN YOU FIND CAPTAIN KOALA?

COLOUR IN THE NUMBERED SPACES WITH THE RIGHT COLOUR AND HE WILL APPEAR!

- 1. ORANGE
- 2. YELLOW
- 3. RED
- 4. BROWN
- 5. DARK GREY



HELP CK FIND THE WATER SUPPLY



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