



Tuross Head Rural Fire Brigade

I guess you've all heard the worldly adage “do as I say, not as I do”, and it came home as a truism just recently when my wife and I were staying with friends up near Gosford. One of these friends and I were discussing matters apropos bush fire fighting (as one tends to do when one's property backs on to a well vegetated, fire scarred, reserve). Our friend, a longtime member of a local Community Fire Unit (CFU) even has a well stocked Fire Brigade trailer situated right next to his house. For those unfamiliar with the term, a CFU is crewed by local volunteers who receive training and equipment from the NSW Fire Brigade to prepare, prevent and protect themselves, their families and their properties

from spot fires and ember attack generated by bushfires.

But getting back to the previously cited expression. Having just undertaken the RFS Advanced Firefighting Course I was feeling somewhat enthusiastic, so I casually asked about his evacuation plan in case we were woken up in the middle of the night to the strident sounds of his smoke alarm. He had to admit that he hadn't got around to making a plan, but agreed that it was a good idea and he must get on to it soon. He was only slightly mollified when I added that we yet to make a detailed plan ourselves! Sure, we had both advised anyone prepared to listen that they should make an up-to-date “home fire escape plan” but ...!!!

In case you are one of us “few” who have yet to undertake this relatively simple but potentially life saving exercise read the following (prepared through a collaboration of the NSW Fire Brigades, NSW Rural Fire Service, ACT Fire Brigade and ACT Rural Fire Service) - and act on it TODAY!! To “Plan your actions before a fire happens” you can also go to <http://fire.nsw.gov.au/page.php?id=593>.

HOME FIRE ESCAPE PLAN CHECKLIST

Every home and workplace should have a fire escape plan. Accidental home fires by their very nature can catch people unawares. Without an escape plan you are placing your life and your families' lives in jeopardy. For a safer home regularly practice the following escape tips:

- ★ Know two safe ways out of every room
- ★ Draw your escape plan on paper and discuss your escape plan with your family
- ★ As you escape make sure you close internal doors behind you
- ★ Decide on a safe outside meeting place eg. near the letterbox
- ★ Make sure that your windows and doors can quickly open if and when required
- ★ Install smoke alarms: test them regularly and change the batteries at least every year
- ★ Smoke alarms can alert you to a fire, an escape plan can then help get you out alive
- ★ Practise your escape plan regularly with all your family members / householders
- ★ If there is a fire in your home, do not wait, EVERY SECOND COUNTS, escape immediately and then call 000 from a neighbours home
- ★ Once you get out, STAY OUT, never go back inside a burning building
- ★ Remember to consider the special needs of children, the elderly or the disabled when developing your escape plan

SAFETY TIPS

- ★ Remember that smoke from a fire will make you confused and that you cannot see in smoke
- ★ When asleep you will not smell smoke and it will in fact put you into a deeper sleep
- ★ Oil, gas or wood heating units may require a yearly maintenance check
- ★ Only ever use fuses of the recommended rating and install an electrical safety switch
- ★ Home fire safety is important for the whole family and preparation can prevent a tragedy

Want to know more? Come on up to Drake Street any Wednesday evening between 5:30 and 7:30pm or check out the RFS Web site at <http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/>.

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