



# FIRE SAFETY FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH DEMENTIA

## COMMUNITY FIRE SAFETY FACT SHEET

When considering the needs of a person living with dementia, it is important to find the right balance between independence and the need for fire safety protection. Adding safety features around the home helps give them more freedom to move around independently and safely.

**BOOK  
A FREE  
HOME  
SAFETY  
VISIT**



[fire.nsw.gov.au/visits](https://fire.nsw.gov.au/visits)

**IN AN EMERGENCY  
CALL TRIPLE ZERO  
(000)**

**For more information** visit [fire.nsw.gov.au](https://fire.nsw.gov.au) or your local fire station.



**Symptoms of dementia, such as reduced memory and attention, poor judgement, and impaired spatial awareness, may unintentionally increase the risk of fire.**

- Ensure they have working smoke alarms.
- Increase the number of smoke alarms in the home.
- If necessary, consider fitting isolation valves/kill switches to gas or electric cookers, so that the cooker cannot be turned on and left on.
- Induction cookers can be another safer alternative.
- Use a safety iron, which turns itself off if it's left on too long.
- Never smoke in bed. Cigarettes should be completely extinguished in deep non-combustible ashtrays which are regularly emptied.

**A person living with dementia may feel vulnerable at home and choose to install additional security measures, such as security doors and windows. However, these measures could impact their safety and compromise fire escape plans during an emergency.**

- Fire and Rescue NSW recommends keeping keys in locks but if necessary keep the keys to the security doors in an easy-to-find, clearly

labelled place for quick access in an emergency.

- Outdoor key safes are great for emergency access to a loved one's house and can assist in emergency situations.

**A person with dementia may not recognise poisonous substances or mistake them for something else.**

- Remove or safely store poisons, such as weed killer, snail bait, bleach, disinfectant and cleaning products in a lockable cupboard.
- Label cupboards with poisons signage.

**Dementia is a condition that reduces the person's cognitive abilities over time. There may be a point in time when the person may not be able to use appliances safely.**

- Remove and store electric appliances such as kettles, toasters, and irons in a lockable cupboard. Installing a kitchen electrical isolation switch can also enhance safety.
- Insert safety plugs into unused electrical outlets.
- Flood sensors are also useful in case taps are left running.
- Remove access to candles.