

VEHICLE SAFETY

Call emergency services: 0800 033 911 for assistance.

Remain calm but act quickly

This documentation is merely guidelines, suggestions or recommendations and NOT a complete list of loss-control measures; it has been compiled from information obtained via the internet from various fire and safety sites to assist in the basic learning of fire safety. The information is NOT intended to replace manuals or instructions provided by the manufacturer or the advice of a qualified professional; nor is it intended to effect coverage under any policy.



A burning vehicle is a DEATH TRAP.

Vehicles catch fire for many reasons and therefore have become a huge public safety threat and concern. Explosions do not always occur but toxic fumes will be a major threat. Vehicle fires are not necessary due to a collision and do not always result in injury or property damage, however, these are still a danger due to unwanted spectators. Vehicle fires usually progress slowly in the early stages, allowing quick action to be taken including allowing all occupants to time to exit the burning vehicle and escape injury. Mainly, injuries or fatalities occur when an occupant is trapped, asleep, disabled, intoxicated or too young to escape.

CAUTION: If you open your bonnet when you see flames, you are exposing the fire to oxygen fuelling it and therefore creating possible further damage.



SOME SAFETY EQUIPMENT / ESSENTIALS YOU COULD KEEP IN YOUR CAR?

| | | | | |
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| <p><u>fire extinguisher</u></p> | <p><u>first aid kit</u></p> | <p><u>Jumper cables / battery booster</u></p> | <p><u>Glass hammer</u></p> | <p><u>Spare fuses</u></p> |
| <p><u>Cable ties</u></p> | <p><u>Road maps / GPS</u></p> | <p><u>Whistle</u></p> | <p><u>Pepper spray</u></p> | <p><u>Gloves</u></p> |
| <p><u>Tow rope</u></p> | <p><u>Tyre repair kit</u></p> | <p><u>Spare tyre and tools</u></p> | <p><u>Safety vest</u></p> | <p><u>Triangle</u></p> |
| <p><u>Compass</u></p> | <p><u>Fire Blanket</u></p> | <p><u>Towel/cloth/blanket</u></p> | <p><u>Torch</u></p> | <p><u>Torch batteries</u></p> |
| <p><u>Cell phone charger</u></p> | <p><u>Tissues</u></p> | <p><u>Water bottle</u></p> | <p><u>Power bank</u></p> | <p><u>Tyre inflator</u></p> |



REMEMBER: EVERY TIME YOU USE A FIRE EXTINGUISHER (EVEN IF IT IS NOT COMPLETELY EMPTY) IT NEEDS TO BE RECHARGED CONTACT OUR OFFICES ON 0878022891 FOR FURTHER ENQUIRIES



Preparation and awareness can increase your chances of escape and help you to avoid unfortunate and sometimes lethal circumstances.

KNOW YOUR FIRE EXTINGUISHER: Where, which, what, when why, who, how?

- Where to install / position it? Place the fire extinguisher where it is easily accessible
- Where to locate it? Know where the fire extinguisher is installed or located for a quick response
- Which fire extinguisher? Fire extinguishers come in various sizes and types; they have different mediums, which are used on different classes of fires. DCP (dry chemical powder) fire extinguishers are the best for vehicles.
- How to use it? Read, learn and familiarise yourself with the instructions on how to extinguish the fire. Familiarising yourself with the size, types and classes of fire extinguishers will give you the confidence you require and therefore in an event of a fire you will know exactly what to do with your fire extinguisher and how to use it
- When to use it? Use only if safe to do so: when the fire initially ignites, or if it is not too intense.
- Why use it? If you are able to contain the fire, do so, however, please note that using a fire extinguisher may not extinguish the fire completely. Using a fire extinguisher when safe to do so can also eliminate further damage to vehicle, injuries to persons and inconvenience of having to contact insurance companies or waiting for the vehicle to be repaired
- Who should use it? Preferably a trained person should use the fire extinguisher, however, not many people are trained to do so, **contact our offices on 0878022891 for further enquiries.** If you feel confident enough and have the correct type extinguisher you can attempt to extinguish the fire.
- What to do with it? **Interior fire:**
If the fire is relatively small, use your fire extinguisher as per the manufacturer's instruction label.
Bonnet/hood:
If the fire is relatively small, use your fire extinguisher as per the manufacturer's instruction label.
Pop the bonnet release but DO NOT lift the hood, lifting the hood could cause a small fire to instantaneously turn into a large, uncontrollable fire.
Lifting the hood will let oxygen in feeding the fire.
Once release is popped, quickly spray THROUGH the gap (do not stand too close) and aim at the base of the fire rather than the flames.
By petrol tank:
Your chance of safely extinguishing a fire located at the rear of the vehicle near the petrol tank is extremely small.

It's generally not recommended that you try to put out the fire yourself.

Opening the hood or car doors increases the air supply and may accelerate the fire.

WHETHER YOU HAVE BEEN TRAINED OR NOT, EXTINGUISHING A FIRE IS EXTREMELY DANGEROUS.

TAKE CARE AND NEVER BE AFRAID TO CALL THE EMERGENCY SERVICES ON: 0800033911 FOR ASSISTANCE

Act fast when a fire breaks out



If you smell smoke or see flames coming from your car while you're driving, **Remain calm but act quickly.**

Always be prepared as car fires can also break out inside the car as well as the engine compartment, such as under the vehicle, near the wheels and brakes, in the dashboard and even inside the car e.g. cigarette embers can ignite the carpet or pieces of paper that are lying around.

Fire extinguishers:



Keep a dry chemical powder fire extinguisher close at hand and easily accessible in your vehicle, e.g. don't place luggage over the fire extinguisher. Make sure the fire extinguisher is always pressurised and ready to use. Fire extinguisher can be used to extinguish the flames when first seen and hopefully eliminate any major details. Vehicles are not the only use for fire extinguishers, fire extinguishers can be used to extinguish grass fires should you be traveling over dry grass and your vehicle ignites a grass patch.

What to do if your vehicle catches fire

We recommend taking the following steps if you're driving and a fire starts:

Make your own safety and the safety of your passengers your priority.

Only try to put out the fire if you have the necessary equipment, skill, and knowledge to do so safely.

Be cautious of attempting to extinguish the fire yourself, risks of explosions or inhaling toxic fumes are extremely high. Toxic fume inhalation is one of the common reasons for fire-related deaths. Remember that it is more important to save lives than to save your car.

If you see smoke or flames or smell burning rubber or plastic, immediate precautions must be taken:

- Do not panic, stay calm, think quickly Call **0800033911**
- Using indications, pull over to a safe location off the road as quickly as possible (side lane/island)
- When stopped, TURN OFF the engine, remember to activate the hand brake
- Keep hood/trunk closed, opening it will allow oxygen in, fuelling the fire
- Get all passengers out of the car quickly.
- Do not waste time retrieving personal items from the vehicle.
- Move as far away from the vehicle as possible, this includes bystanders.
- Alert oncoming traffic, use emergency triangle if this is possible

What to do if your vehicle catches fire due to an accident

If it is impossible to get out of the car immediately (trapping, injuries, dangerous situations outside), alternatively, attempt to carry out these critical steps:

Caution is to be taken when carrying out these steps as they could add to the injuries sustained in the accident.

- **Unlock and open doors:**
Unlocked doors will allow bystanders to assist if able (before trained rescuers arrive on scene) as well as enabling the rescue team to retrieve you a lot faster from the burning vehicle.
If the doors do not open, and you are able to do so, attempt to kick the door open.
- **Unlock and open the windows:**
Opening windows will allow trapped toxic fumes to be released as well as increasing the rescue time.
If the windows will not open, and you are able to do so, attempt to **kick the windows out**.
Use both feet against a side window in order to shatter and pop window out of the frame.
This action will expel trapped toxic fumes and smoke as well as enable you to exit the vehicle if the door will not open and if you have the strength to escape through the window.
- **Remove your seat belt:**
Removing your seat belt should be done as quickly as possible so that the metal does not get too hot to touch as well as the heat of the fire does not fuse the metal of the buckle to the anchor together.
If the buckle doesn't release, push the shoulder strap over your head and try lifting your legs out from underneath the waist strap.

THE EMERGENCY GLASS HAMMER CAN SMASH A WINDOW AS WELL AS SLICE YOUR SEAT BELT OFF



We all keep our doors on "child lock" to prevent children from accidentally opening doors while vehicle is in motion, however, in the event of an emergency, this child lock device can be detrimental to the safety of your loved ones. Opening doors to get passengers out will therefore be difficult and if the seat belt has jammed due to the impact or weighted down by something or someone this tool will be extremely helpful. It delivers a fast and efficient escape from a burning, upturned, submerged or immobilized vehicle. Its points cut windows with one strike and the sharp blade slashes easily through jammed seat belts. It should be positioned where it is visible and easy to reach, the bright colours also assists with finding it if the impact dislodged it.

Once the fire has been extinguished and the fire fighters have confirmed it is safe to do so:

- Take photos of the damage and area,
- Collect witness contact details and reports
- Contact your insurance company.
- Remove personal items from the vehicle.
- Arrange for towing to a repair/inspection shop (authorised by your insurance company)
- Do not attempt to operate the vehicle until it has been inspected

Cause of Vehicle Fires:

A motor vehicle contains many flammable materials including solid and liquid combustibles such as upholstery, petrol and oil.

- Fuel, motor oil, transmission fluid, power steering fluid, brake fluid can lead to engine fires, if a fire doesn't ignite the leakage of a flammable or combustible liquid in an engine compartment can result in a mechanical failure. These failures can be due to usual wear and tear so service intervals must be adhered to.
- A new vehicle or recently serviced vehicle could also catch fire; this possibly could be due to human error where fluid connections are not securely fastened /tightened correctly.
- Car batteries pose a fairly unique hazard - hydrogen gas evolved in the electrolysis reaction ignites readily in fire conditions and can result in an explosive dispersion of battery acid.
- Electrical short circuits, faulty fuses or cigarettes could be a cause of a fire igniting in the passenger compartment.

Advice when Vehicle is on Fire:

- Smoke does not necessarily mean fire. Depending on the age of the vehicle, it could be steam from the radiator, which could be caused by a broken fan belt or over-heated engine. **THIS COULD LEAD TO A FIRE.** Get your vehicle checked out if it is smoking or omitting odours before operating it.
- Smoke accumulates quickly within the closed vehicle, this increases the interior temperature, the fire itself could make a time bomb out of the petrol tank, so,
REMAIN CALM, THINK FAST, AND ESCAPE FROM THE BURNING VEHICLE AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.

Know the danger signs:

- Cracked or loose wiring with exposed metal or electrical problems, including a fuse that blows more than once
- Oil or fluid leaks under the vehicle
- Oil cap not on securely
- Rapid changes in fuel or fluid level, or engine temperature
- Spilled oil under the hood left over from an oil change
- Very loud sounds from the exhaust system
- Broken or loose hoses

Some ideas on how to prevent a vehicle fire



Drive Safely and Carefully

One element of car fires is a consequence of a road accident. Limiting reckless driving will help protect the driver and prevent an accident. Look out for fire hazards such as damaged power lines or during a storm, that is: keep away from anything that could ignite flammables in your car.



Keep your Vehicle Clutter Free

Although the clutter may not cause the fire it will fuel the fire. Avoid throwing cigarette butts anywhere.



Dangerous Goods

If you must transport dangerous goods (e.g. petrol), transport small amounts in a sealed, leak proof, certified gas canister, such as a Jerry Can, preferably in the trunk/boot AND keep windows open for ventilation and car interior temperature cool. Not only could flammable liquids start a fire they can also contribute or fuel a fire. Toxic fumes and smoke inhalation could be potentially life threatening.



Vehicle Maintenance

Service your vehicle when required by an authorised dealer or mechanic.



Vehicle checks

Check your engine, fuel lines and tanks at regular intervals.

Be alert of any changes in regards to engine and exhaust sounds when driving. A louder than usual exhaust tone, smoke coming from the tailpipe or a backfiring exhaust could mean problems or damage to the high-temperature exhaust and emission control system on the vehicle. Observe your gauge frequently; check if the temperature is rising.



Battery checks

Check your battery at regular intervals



Parking

Try not to park a vehicle where flammables, such as grass, are touching the catalytic converter.

Preferably park off the road to avoid any kinds of fire due to vandalism or arson.

Nature of the threat:

Toxic fumes:

Toxic fumes are a real danger. Motor vehicles are made of many synthetic materials that emit harmful and deadly gases when they burn. A main by-product of fires is a lethal concentration of carbon monoxide, which is an odourless, colourless and tasteless gas.

[Seek urgent medical aid](#)

[Call emergency services: 0800033911 for assistance](#)

Injuries:

Fires can cause fatal or depilating burn injuries.

A vehicle fire can generate a lot of heat with a chance of flames and debris shooting out far distances.

Debris could be parts of the vehicle that have burst due to heat including bumpers and hatchback doors, rims, wheels, drive shafts, engine parts, these can become lethal shrapnel.

Fires may also cause air bags to deploy.

Hazardous materials such as battery acid can cause injury even without burning.

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Treatment:

First Aid Kit:



First aid kits will assist in the treatment of temporary ailments whether it is a minor headache or a burn from the engine when checking the oil or water.

Treat all thermal burns by holding the burnt area under running water for up to 20 minutes (water bottle will come in handy if no running water is available) or until skin returns to normal temperature. Remove clothing from burnt area unless stuck; cover burn with a non-adherent burns dressing, plastic wrap or loosely applied aluminium foil.

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Smoke inhalation:



Remove casualty from area to fresh air.

Sit up and loosen tight clothing.

Administer oxygen if available and you are trained in its use.

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