

# media release

SA Metropolitan Fire Service



## Wet weather prompts clothes drying safety warning

Wednesday, 6 July 2011

The current wet weather has prompted a clothes drying fire safety warning from the Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS).

MFS District Officer of Community Safety, Shaun Ruxton said cold, rainy days increase our reliance on clothes dryers, heaters and fireplaces to dry our washing.

“Last winter, firefighters responded to more than 40 fires linked to clothes dryers, heaters and fire places. In several cases, clothing left drying too close to a heater or fireplace led to significant house fires,” Mr Ruxton said.

In April, a Hotel at Paralowie was destroyed by a suspected spontaneous combustion fire. Hot towels from a clothes dryer had been packed away before being allowed to cool and dry completely.

“With a little bit of common sense, families and businesses can prevent these types of fires this winter,” District Officer Ruxton said.

### National Recall

Recently, a **national recall was issued on four brands of clothes dryers** manufactured over a 15 month period in 2005-06.

The dryers have been identified as a fire risk due to faulty door switches that may overheat and catch fire. Further details can be found at:

- [www.recalls.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/1000777](http://www.recalls.gov.au/content/index.phtml/itemId/1000777)

### Clothes drying safety tips

The MFS doesn't discourage the use of heaters and clothes dryers. Instead, the fire service encourages people to follow these safety tips:

- Follow the manufacturer's instructions and ensure the lint filter is cleaned before every load.
- If you use anti static sheets, scrub the lint filter regularly with warm soapy water and then rinse. This will remove any waxy build up on the filter.
- Move the dryer and regularly vacuum any lint that has collected behind and underneath.
- Ensure there is adequate room for ventilation around the dryer.
- Never use the dryer for drying clothes or rags that have been used to absorb flammable liquids or oils (such as linseed oil or turpentine).
- Never use the dryer to dry clothes that have not been washed. Unwashed clothes have a greater build up of contaminants, especially oils and grease. Lint from these clothes will be more combustible and can ignite when hot.
- Never turn the dryer off before the cool down period is over. There have been fires resulting from clothing being left bunched up while still hot inside the dryer. Clothes dryers are designed to allow clothes to cool down before the cycle is finished.
- Do not leave your clothes dryer operating unattended.
- Any repairs of your clothes dryer must be carried out by a qualified tradesperson in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- **Keep any items that could catch fire well clear from heaters and open fires.** Clearance from clothes, bedding, curtains and other combustibles should be at least **two metres**.
- **Always** ensure washing is completely cool and dry before storing.

The fire service urges householders to combine the above safety tips with reliable, working smoke alarms that are less than 10 years old and a Home Fire Escape Plan.

For more information on home fire safety, please visit [www.mfs.sa.gov.au](http://www.mfs.sa.gov.au)

**For media enquiries and interviews call the MFS Media Line on (08) 8204 3770**

**Further information for the public:**

Call the MFS Community Education Department on (08) 8204 3611 during business hours.  
Country callers 1300 737 637.

[www.mfs.sa.gov.au](http://www.mfs.sa.gov.au)