

## Minister Tony Piccolo

Minister for Emergency Services

Saturday, 11 July, 2015

### Winter fire warning

Winter has brought much needed rain and cooler temperatures, but it also has brought 169 house fires.

While the number of fatalities is reducing each year, between 50 and 60 South Australians are injured in house fires. South Australia has recently recorded a number of significant house fires, including fires involving injuries and a fatality.

Emergency Services Minister Tony Piccolo said figures show cooking mishaps accounted for almost 75 per cent of those house fires.

“Unattended cooking is one of the most common causes of house fires,” Mr Piccolo said.

“Over the last five years, four South Australians have died and a further 10 have been seriously injured due to cooking fires.

“Each winter, MFS and CFS firefighters respond to hundreds of cooking fires and the damage these fires cause can range from partial or total house loss, through to burn injuries and fatalities.”

Last winter, Metropolitan Fire Service and Country Fire Service firefighters responded to more than 340 house fires linked to cold-weather related causes.

MFS Commander Greg Howard said there was one key message on home fire safety for this winter.

“Never leave cooking unattended. If you leave the kitchen, turn the power off. If a fat or oil fire starts, never use water to put it out,” he said.

“Use a fire blanket, cooking utensil lid or a Dry Chemical Powder fire extinguisher.

“If the fire frightens you, our advice is to close the kitchen door, evacuate the home and phone Triple Zero immediately. There’s no charge for the fire service to attend a fire.”

The MFS urges all householders to follow these key cooking fire safety tips:

- Never leave cooking unattended.
- Use extra caution when cooking with oils. Heat cooking oils slowly.
- Never throw water onto an oil or fat fire. Use a fire blanket, cooking utensil lid or a Dry Chemical Powder fire extinguisher.
- Never try to move a pan that has caught on fire. This may result in spillage, injury and the spreading of fire.

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- If a fire occurs in the oven, turn the oven off and leave the oven door closed to smother the fire. If the fire does not go out, evacuate your home before calling triple zero for help.

Country Fire Service State Coordinator Leigh Miller said every person in the home should know how to use a fire blanket and fire extinguisher before the need arises.

“Householders should consider buying a fire blanket and a portable fire extinguisher that meet the Australian Standard to keep them safe in the kitchen. A Dry Chemical Powder fire extinguisher with a minimum rating of 5B(E) is recommended.”

The South Australian Fire Services recommend combining the above safety tips with photo-electric smoke alarms that are less than 10 years old and a Home Fire Escape Plan.

<b>Fire Cause</b>	<b>Winter 2013*</b>	<b>Winter 2014*</b>	<b>Winter 2015*</b>
<b>Cooking fires</b>	216	249	123
<b>Chimneys &amp; Flues</b>	47	46	23
<b>Home heating fires</b>	14	36	14
<b>Electric Blankets</b>	1	4	5
<b>Clothes Dryers</b>	3	8	4
<b>TOTAL</b> (1 April to 30 Sept)	<b>281 winter fires</b>	<b>343 winter fires</b>	<b>169</b> (to date 9/7/15)

*\*Fires responded to by MFS and CFS firefighters.*