

media release



Heat your home safely during current cold snap

Tuesday, 12 July 2016

This week's predicted cold snap and potential for snow has prompted South Australia's fire services to issue a warning about safely heating your home.

Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) and Country Fire Service (CFS) firefighters continue to support the State Emergency Service (SES) at weather related callouts across the state.

MFS Assistant Chief Fire Officer of Community Safety and Resilience, Phil Kilsby said the current chill may see South Australians going to extra lengths to keep warm.

"We're all seeking to stay warm and comfortable as this cold weather passes over the state. However, what firefighters don't want to see are unsafe methods of home heating, increasing the risk of house fires and potential injuries or fatalities."

"Combustibles such as clothing, bedding and washing should be kept at least two metres from heaters and open fires. Never use gas fuelled patio and outdoor heaters or braziers indoors," MFS Assistant Chief Fire Officer Kilsby said.

CFS State Coordinator Phil McDonough said the fire services are asking families and friends to check on the elderly to ensure they're warm, comfortable and heating their home safely.

"People should always use a full-size fire screen in front of open fires to prevent sparks or embers coming into contact with carpet, furniture or other flammable items."

"Never place hot ashes in household bins, plastic buckets or council bins. Have a metal bucket which you use only for ash. Let the ash cool completely before disposing of it," he said.

Further home heating safety tips are available below:

- Keep any items that can burn well clear of heaters and fires. Clearance from clothes, bedding, furniture, curtains, and other combustibles ideally should be two metres.
- Clothes airers placed around or near heaters are a high fire risk. If they fall over clothing can become dangerously close to the heater.
- Turn heating equipment off when you leave the house, and do not leave portable heaters running for extended periods of time unless the appliance is specifically designed for that purpose.
- Discontinue use of any faulty heating equipment immediately. Have it repaired by a qualified tradesperson or replace it with a new item.
- Choose a portable heater that has an automatic safety switch that turns the heater off if it is tipped over.
- Always use a full-size fire screen in front of open fires to prevent sparks or embers coming into contact with carpet, furniture or other flammable items.
- Never place hot ashes in household bins, plastic buckets or council bins. Have a metal bucket which you use only for ash. Let the ash cool completely before disposing of it.
- Flues and chimneys usually pass through roof spaces to vent smoke and gas and they become hot when the fire or heater is in use. Roof spaces should be inspected regularly to ensure that rubbish in the roof space (vermin nests, leaves, dust etc) has not accumulated around chimneys and flues, and to ensure that the chimney and any protective shrouding is still intact.

Early detection is vital. The MFS urges householders to combine the above safety tips with interconnected photo-electric smoke alarms that are less than 10 years old and a Home Fire Escape Plan.

**For media enquiries telephone the
MFS Media Line (08) 8204 3770 or the CFS Media Line on (08) 8212 9849**

Further information:

MFS Community Education Department **8204 3611** Country callers **1300 737 637**

For deaf and hearing impaired or teletype service **TTY 133 677**

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