



Media Release

SA Metropolitan Fire Service

MFS calls for caution with clothes dryer use this winter

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With another cold snap forecast this weekend the Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) is calling for householders to be vigilant when using clothes dryers to reduce the chance of fire starting.

MFS Community Engagement Officer, Angelo Mastripolito said a few routine maintenance checks and actions can significantly reduce the risk of a fire.

“The MFS recommends cleaning the lint filter before every use and if using anti-static sheets, scrub the filter every month using warm soapy water and rinse thoroughly to remove the waxy build up.

“It’s also important to remember to let the dryer complete its cool down cycle and remove dried clothing before turning it off as fires have started with clothing being bunched up while still hot inside the dryer.

“These quick steps can help avoid a fire tragedy. On average, 64 people a year lose their life in preventable house fires across Australia,” said Angelo Mastripolito.

The MFS recommends following these safety tips to reduce the potential for a fire:

- **Never leave clothes dryer running while no-one is at home.**
- Follow the manufacturer’s instructions and ensure the **lint filter is cleaned** before every load.
- Never use the dryer for drying clothes or rags that have been used to absorb flammable liquids or oils. You need to wash clothes worn while using oils or sprays in hot water and detergent to remove such substances before putting them in a dryer.
- 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.
- If you use anti-static sheets, scrub the lint filter with warm soapy water and then rinse every month. This will remove a waxy build up on the filter.
- 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.
- Move the dryer and vacuum lint that has collected behind and underneath the unit, at least once a year.
- Ensure there is adequate room for ventilation around the dryer.
- Any repairs of your clothes dryer must be carried out by a qualified tradesperson in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions.

The MFS urges householders to combine the above safety tips with interconnected smoke alarms that are less than 10 years old and a Home Fire Escape Plan. For more information on home fire safety visit mfs.sa.gov.au.

For media enquiries please telephone the MFS Media Line on (08) 8204 3770

Members of the public should call the MFS Community Engagement Department on (08) 8204 3611 during business hours for further information. Country callers 1300 737 637.

