

media release

SA Metropolitan Fire Service



Prepare to keep cool this summer

Wednesday, 6 January 2016

The South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) is encouraging the community to have their air cooling equipment serviced **NOW** before the heat of summer returns.

MFS Acting Commander of Community Safety and Resilience, Simon Hogben said it is important that air conditioners, evaporative coolers and fans are checked and serviced by a qualified tradesperson before the arrival of long periods of hot weather.

“In recent years, South Australia has experienced extended heatwaves and more of the same is occurring this summer. If you have faulty or poorly maintained air cooling equipment, the risk of overheating and consequently fire, increases.”

“It is very important to maintain all home appliances and the MFS recommends that people have their air cooling equipment serviced **now**, so they are ready to withstand the rest of this lengthy summer,” MFS Acting Commander, Simon Hogben said.

Since 2012, Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) and Country Fire Service (CFS) firefighters have responded to more than 112 house fires caused by air conditioners, evaporative coolers and fans. It is pleasing to see the number of fires reducing and we want that trend to continue.

CALENDAR YEAR	FIRES CAUSED BY AIR COOLING EQUIPMENT
2016 (to date, 6/01)	1 fire*
2015	19 fires*
2014	24 fires*
2013	29 fires*
2012	39 fires*
TOTAL	112 fires* (2012 – 2016)

* Fire incidents responded to by MFS and CFS firefighters

It is stressed the Fire Services **DO NOT discourage** the use of electrical air cooling equipment over summer, as it can be a necessary health requirement. However, there are some simple tips people can follow to stay cool and comfortable safely.

The MFS advises that you can reduce the potential for fire and life risk in the following ways:

- Electrical cooling equipment such as air conditioners and evaporative coolers should be installed by a qualified tradesperson in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- All electrical cooling equipment, both permanently installed systems and portable equipment, should be regularly serviced by a licensed tradesperson according to the manufacturer's specifications.
- Arrange to have your equipment serviced before the start of summer so that it is fully functional when the hot weather begins.
- Ask the tradesperson to check for faults, remove any build-up of dust or combustible material and ensure the equipment is in good working order.
- Do not leave your air cooling equipment running unattended while not at home.
- Watch for signs of your electrical cooling equipment overheating. Keep a spare, well maintained fan that can keep you cool while resting overheated cooling equipment.
- If you have an older air conditioner without a regulating thermostat, consider replacing it with one that has a regulating thermostat.
- Keep portable electrical cooling equipment away from wet areas to avoid the possibility of electric shock.
- Children must be supervised when cooling equipment is in use. Keep an eye on children and pets, particularly when portable equipment is within reach.

The MFS urges householders to combine the above safety tips with hard-wired, interconnected photo-electric smoke alarms that are well maintained and less than 10 years old and a Home Fire Escape Plan.

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

Further information for the public:

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

www.mfs.sa.gov.au