

media release

SA Metropolitan Fire Service



Let your love burn, not your home this Valentine's Day

Thursday, 11 February 2016

This Valentine's Day the South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) is urging those affected by the love bug, to consider using flameless, battery operated candles to create their romantic setting, rather than calling the Fire Service to cool the flames.

MFS Community Education Officer, Simon Johnson, said, "While candles create a romantic atmosphere, they have the potential to destroy homes and lives.

"Valentine's Day is a time when candles can be left unattended or forgotten altogether due to distractions and that's why the MFS is recommending the use of battery-operated artificial candles *instead of* real candles. They will reduce the risk of a devastating house fire starting," Mr Johnson said.

A candle is an open flame. Left unattended, candles can easily cause a house fire. The MFS has responded to two house fires this week caused by candles being located too close to flammables and being left unattended.

"Lit candles should never be placed in windows, where blinds or curtains can close over them, or where they can be knocked over by children or pets.

"Keep candles well away from items that can catch fire, such as clothing, bedding, books, paper and curtains. Use only sturdy candles holders which are non-combustible and will not tip over and ensure that all candles are extinguished before leaving a room or going to sleep.

"We would prefer that candles aren't used if children or pets are present. But if you do, keep candles up high, out of reach and never leave a child or pet unattended in a room with a candle," he said.

If people choose to use candles, here are some simple **home fire safety** tips to follow:

- If possible choose flameless LED candles.
- Use candles only with constant adult supervision.
- Extinguish all candles when leaving a room or going to sleep.
- Keep candles well away from items that can catch fire, such as clothing, bedding, books, paper, curtains etc.
- Make sure candles are placed in sturdy holders that will not tip over and place on a secure piece of heat-resistant furniture. Candle holders must be non-combustible.
- Do not place lit candles in windows, where blinds or curtains can close over them.
- Keep candles and all open flames away from flammable liquids.
- Do not use candles in places where they can be knocked over by children or pets.
- Keep the immediate area around a candle clear of all items.

MFS also warns people not to use their fuse box to turn household lights off, as this may disable their smoke alarms if back-up batteries have gone flat.

The fire service 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 8204 3770

Further information for the public:

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

www.mfs.sa.gov.au