

media release



Icy conditions and power outage prompt fire safety warning

Wednesday, 13 July 2016

As the state's icy conditions continue, South Australia's fire services are urging those affected by power outages to ensure they switch off electrical heating and cooking appliances until power's restored.

Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) and Country Fire Service (CFS) firefighters continue to assist State Emergency Service (SES) volunteers attend to the remaining weather related incidents.

MFS Assistant Chief Fire Officer of Community Safety and Resilience, Phil Kilsby said firefighters are concerned people may unknowingly leave electrical appliances switched on during power outages.

"If people experience a prolonged outage, they may forget that they've left a heater or cooking appliance switched on and leave the house for many hours. If power restores while they're out, it could create the risk of a house fire, especially if combustibles are left near heaters.

"With school holidays underway and extra people at home, South Australians are likely to have a heavy reliance on heating over the next few days. Visit the MFS website at www.mfs.sa.gov.au for comprehensive fire safety tips on home heating," MFS ACFO Kilsby said.

CFS State Coordinator, Phil McDonough said during power outages some households may rely on candles to light their home.

"The fire services recommend choosing safer flameless options for lighting your home, such as torches, flashlights and other lights generated by batteries. If candles are used, we urge people not to leave lit candles unattended in rooms with children or animals."

"We also warn against experimenting with improvised heating solutions inside the home as the risk of a tragic house fire is just too great with many options not intended for inside use," he said.

Further home fire safety tips for power outages are available below:

- Ensure electrical appliances such as heaters and cooking appliances are switched off during power outages to prevent a potential house fire when power restores.
- If the power goes out, 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.
- Candles should only ever be used by adults.
- 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 made of material that can not burn.
- Extinguish all candles when leaving a room or going to sleep.
- 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.
- Torches/flashlights and other lights generated by batteries are much safer light sources than candles. Wind up torches are available.
- Try to avoid carrying a lit candle and don't use a candle to go into confined spaces like a walk-in robe.
- Never use a candle for light when fueling equipment, such as a kerosene heater or lantern as the flame may ignite the fumes.
- Battery operated candles are a good and safe alternative to traditional candles.

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**

Or visit www.mfs.sa.gov.au and www.cfs.sa.gov.au