

media release

SA Metropolitan Fire Service



Drying clothes shouldn't cost your home

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With wet, wintery weather continuing across South Australia, the Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) is offering advice on the safe use of clothes dryers.

MFS Acting Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Community Safety and Resilience, Greg Howard says the risk of house fires increases when equipment is poorly maintained or used without following manufacturer's guidelines.

"It's critical that clothes dryers are not left running while occupants are out and that the full cycle is allowed to complete including cool down settings before clothes are removed.

"Before turning the dryer on the lint filter should be cleaned, and if anti-static sheets are used the lint filter must be washed every month in warm soapy water to remove the waxy build up.

"Preventing house fires isn't that hard, but it does mean paying attention while using electrical appliances in the home, rather than turning them on and thinking they can be left alone," said MFS Assistant Chief Fire Officer Howard.

The MFS doesn't discourage the use of clothes dryers. Instead, the fire service encourages everyone to follow these safety tips:

- Follow the manufacturer's instructions and ensure the lint filter is cleaned before every load.
- If you use anti static sheets scrub the lint filter every month with warm soapy water and then rinse. This will remove any waxy build up on the filter.
- Move the dryer and regularly vacuum any lint that has collected behind and underneath.
- Ensure there is adequate room for ventilation around the dryer.
- Never use the dryer for drying clothes or rags that have been used to absorb flammable liquids or oils.
- Wash clothes worn while using oils or sprays in hot water and detergent to remove such substances before putting them in a dryer.
- 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.
- 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.
- Do not leave your clothes dryer running while no-one is at home.
- 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, photo-electric smoke alarms that are less than 10 years old and a Home Fire Escape Plan.

For more information on home fire safety, please visit www.mfs.sa.gov.au

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 8204 3611 during business hours.
Country callers 1300 737 637.

www.mfs.sa.gov.au