

media release

SA Metropolitan Fire Service



Keep your cool this summer

Thursday, 17 November 2016

The Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) wants the community to keep its cool this summer by ensuring home air cooling equipment is serviced before the arrival of summer heat.

MFS Community Education Officer Simon Johnson, says air conditioners, evaporative coolers and fans should be checked and serviced by a qualified tradesperson well before summer heat arrives.

“In recent years, many South Australians have been caught out with hot weather arriving early in the summer season leaving little time to arrange for annual servicing of air conditioners before use.

“Poorly maintained or faulty air cooling equipment heightens the risk of fires due to overheating. If you have air cooling equipment, our advice is to have it serviced now, so that when the summer heat arrives, you can be confident that you’re prepared to keep your cool,” he said.

“All home appliances should undergo routine maintenance to ensure they remain in good working order including air cooling equipment. Service them **now**, so they are ready to see you and your families through the summer months,” MFS Community Education Officer, Simon Johnson said.

Since 2013, Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) and Country Fire Service (CFS) firefighters have responded to more than 80 house fires caused by air conditioners, evaporative coolers and fans.

CALENDAR YEAR	FIRES CAUSED BY AIR COOLING EQUIPMENT
2016 (to date 16/11)	12 fires*
2015	19 fires*
2014	24 fires*
2013	29 fires*
TOTAL	84 fires* (2013 – 2016)

* Fire incidents responded to by MFS and CFS firefighters

Over the past few years the number of fires caused by cooling equipment has declined, a trend which the MFS wants to continue.

South Australian 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:

- Arrange to have your equipment serviced before the start of summer so that it is fully functional when the hot weather begins.
- Clean or replace return air filters as per manufacturers’ instructions
- Electrical cooling equipment such as air conditioners and evaporative coolers should be installed by a qualified tradesperson in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions.
- Evaporative air-conditioners should be serviced before the start of summer according to the manufacturer’s specifications.
- 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