

media release



Cracking out the BBQ this Christmas? Plan ahead to avoid disappointment

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The South Australian Country Fire Service (CFS) and South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) are urging the community to plan ahead for their Christmas lunches and think about what they will do if 25 December is declared a Total Fire Ban Day.

Nobody wants to be a Grinch at Christmas, but it's important for people to understand what a Total Fire Ban means so that they know what they can and can't do.

Solid fuel BBQs using wood or charcoal (such as Webers) are not to be used on Total Fire Ban Days without a Schedule 10 permit. These permits to use a solid fuel BBQ can be obtained from the majority of the 68 local councils across the state well in advance.

Applications can take some time to process and involve an inspection of your premises for compliance with vegetation clearance and hazard reduction requirements. Therefore, we encourage the public who are planning to use one of these cookers to contact their local council now and not leave it until the last minute, especially as Christmas falls on a Monday this year.

Total Fire Bans are announced before 5pm the previous day via the CFS website, Alert SA app and social media. However, waiting until Christmas Eve to see if a Total Fire Ban is issued will be too late to get a permit. By planning in advance, you can ensure you and your family enjoy the best Christmas possible, whatever the weather.

One alternative could be to use a gas BBQ instead. A gas-fired BBQ can be used as long as:

- they are within fifteen metres of a domestic premises or on a coastal foreshore;
- the BBQ is clear of all flammable material to a distance of at least four metres and;
- a person able to control the fire is present until it is extinguished, with an appropriate extinguisher at hand.

Ensure the gas BBQ is safe to use by completing a maintenance check beforehand.

- Check the expiry date on the cylinder. Gas cylinders must be tested every 10 years.
- Check all hose lines for splits, cracks or deterioration of the surface and replace any showing signs of degradation.
- Check the gas cylinder has no dents or bulges and doesn't have any rust. Replace the cylinder if it has signs of deterioration or damage.
- Check all "o" rings are in good condition and are present where they are part of the connection. They must be soft and pliable not hard and cracked.
- Check hose connections and control valves (including regulators) for gas leaks. Turn the cylinder on, and with barbeque knobs turned off, apply copious amounts of soapy water over all the hoses and valves. Bubbles forming indicate a gas leak. NOTE: Do not use solutions containing ammonia, they can cause the brass connections to become brittle and crack.
- Scrub the BBQ to remove fat build-up and empty the fat tray underneath.

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Whilst CFS and MFS firefighters are always ready to respond across the state, we all hope there will be no need to do so this Christmas so they can spend time with their own families and friends, instead of responding to preventable fires.

For more information on what you can and can't do during Fire Danger Season and on a Total Fire Ban Day, visit the CFS website at www.cfs.sa.gov.au

For more information on operating and maintaining BBQs safely at home, visit the MFS website at www.mfs.sa.gov.au

For media enquiries telephone the:

CFS Media Line on (08) 8115 3531 or MFS Media Line (08) 8204 3770

Further information:

Contact the Bushfire Information Hotline 1300 362 361

For deaf and hearing impaired or teletype service TTY 133 677