

media release

SA Metropolitan Fire Service



Faulty, worn electric blankets a house fire risk

Wednesday, 19 August 2020

As South Australians continue to battle the winter chill, the Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) is warning that damaged or faulty electric blankets are a house fire risk.

Over the past five years, electric blanket and electric throw fires have caused **\$2.4 million damage** to 20 homes across the state, with MFS and Country Fire Service (CFS) crews fighting the blazes.

MFS Community Engagement Officer, Phil Evans said if you have a frayed, worn, damaged or faulty electric blanket or electric throw, **discard or replace it now**.

“One of the greatest house fire risks is when people persist with using an electrical item that seems faulty or damaged. Never assume your electric blanket or electric throw will be in the same condition as last winter.

“If you choose to use electric blankets or electric throws, inspect them every year to ensure they aren’t worn, damaged, kinked or faulty. If you notice damage, faults, charring or exposed wires, immediately discontinue using the blanket and discard it,” MFS Community Engagement Officer Evans said.

The MFS’s top three fire safety tips for electric blankets and throws are:

- 1) **Immediately discontinue using and discard** an electric blanket or electric throw that is frayed, worn, damaged or faulty
- 2) **Only use electric blankets or electric throws to pre-warm a bed**, never while you’re in bed or asleep
- 3) **Always turn an electric blanket or electric throw off at the controller and at the wall, then unplug it** to prevent leaving it running indefinitely.

Each year, MFS and CFS firefighters fight house fires started by electric blankets and throws that are mistakenly left running.

MFS Community Engagement Officer Phil Evans said, “Even if your electric blanket or electric throw seems to be in good working order, human error can also lead to a significant house fire. Mistakenly leaving them running is sadly a common occurrence, including in spare rooms after guests stay, or in holiday homes”.

At the end of colder weather, the MFS recommends that people take care with how they store electric blankets and electric throws, by rolling, instead of folding them to prevent damaging the wires.

For more detailed electric blanket and electric throw home fire safety tips, [visit the MFS website](#).

The MFS urges householders to combine the above safety tips with working, interconnected smoke alarms that are less than 10 years old and a Home Fire Escape Plan.

For media enquiries please telephone the MFS Media Line on (08) 8204 3770

Members of the public should call the MFS Community Education Department on (08) 8204 3611 (business hours) for further information. Country callers 1300 737 637.

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