

media release

SA Metropolitan Fire Service



Home fire safety for the festive season

Friday, 23 December 2011

Candles, Christmas lights, air cooling equipment and greasy ovens are some of the key house fire risks that families may face this **Christmas** and festive season.

Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) District Officer of Community Safety, Allan Foster said everyone can enjoy the holiday season and still be safe just by using a little commonsense.

“Many families light candles at Christmas to create a festive atmosphere. If you choose to light candles, keep the immediate area around a candle clear of combustible items, including decorations and curtains. Never leave children or pets unattended with candles, and always ensure lighters and matches are kept up high, out of the reach of children.

“Other festive fire risks can be the overloading of powerboards with Christmas lights. Never overload power boards, and always ensure that transformers and powerboards have adequate ventilation,” District Officer Foster said.

The MFS recommends that people clean any fat build up from under the barbie or in the stove so the slow roasted turkey doesn't end up being incinerated.

With warm weather predicted over the festive season, the MFS warns that the risk of air conditioner / evaporative cooler fires is also heightened.

Importantly, the MFS **does not discourage** the use of electrical air cooling equipment as it can be a necessary health requirement for the elderly or families with young children.

You can reduce the potential for fire in the following ways:

- Electrical cooling equipment such as air conditioners and evaporative coolers should be installed and regularly serviced by a qualified tradesperson in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- Arrange to have your air cooling equipment serviced so that it is fully functional when hot weather occurs. Ask the tradesperson to check for faults, remove any build up of dust or combustible material and ensure the equipment is in good working order.
- Avoid leaving 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 people choose to use candles, here are some additional **home fire safety** tips to follow:

- Use candles only with constant adult supervision and do not use them in places where they can be knocked over by children or pets
- Keep the immediate area around a candle clear of all items, especially items that can catch fire, such as clothing, blinds, curtains, books, paper, tablecloths and decorations
- Make sure candles are placed in sturdy holders that will not tip over, and place them on a secure piece of heat-resistant furniture. Candle holders must be non-combustible
- Extinguish all candles when leaving a room or going to sleep
- Keep candles and all open flames away from flammable liquids.

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

*Finally, the MFS, Country Fire Service (CFS) and State Emergency Service (SES) ask everyone to **drive carefully.***

For media enquiries and interviews call the MFS Media Line on (08) 8204 3770

Further information for the public:

Call the MFS Community Education Department on (08) 8204 3611 during business hours.
Country callers 1300 737 637.

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