

# media release

SA Metropolitan Fire Service



## Power outage home fire safety warning

Wednesday, 28 September 2016

The Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) is urging the public to prevent potential house fires by switching off electrical heating, cooking and other devices that were left on when power outages occurred.

MFS and Country Fire Service (CFS) firefighters continue to support SES volunteers in responding to hundreds of weather-related incidents across South Australia. Their teamwork will continue throughout the night and into Thursday in challenging conditions.

MFS Acting Chief Officer, Michael Morgan said people may have unknowingly left electrical appliances switched on when power outages occurred.

“Our advice to the public is to ensure electrical heating, cooking and other appliances that were in use when power went out, are switched off. This is because people may be asleep or not at home when power is restored.

“If an electrical heating or cooking device switches back on when power is restored, there may be a risk of house fire. It’s important to prevent the risk by switching devices off and keeping combustibles clear of heaters.”

If people choose to use candles during power outages, the MFS advises the use of sturdy holders that won’t tip over and placing them on a secure piece of heat-resistant furniture.

“Keep the immediate area around a candle clear of all items. They should be kept well away from items that can catch fire, such as clothing, books, paper and curtains. Keep candles up high, out of the reach of children and don’t leave candles unattended with children or pets,” MFS Acting Chief Officer, Michael Morgan said.

Further home fire safety tips for power outages are available below:

- Ensure electrical appliances such as heaters and cooking appliances are switched off during power outages to prevent a potential house fire when power restores.
- Keep any items that can burn well clear of heaters and fires. Clearance from clothes, bedding, furniture, curtains, and other combustibles ideally should be two metres.
- Candles should only ever be used by adults.
- Make sure candles are placed in sturdy holders that will not tip over and place on a secure piece of heat-resistant furniture. Candle holders must be made of material that cannot burn.
- Extinguish all candles when leaving a room or going to sleep.
- Do not place lit candles in windows, where blinds or curtains can close over them.
- Keep candles and all open flames away from flammable liquids. Do not use candles in places where they can be knocked over by children or pets.
- Torches/flashlights and other lights generated by batteries are much safer light sources than candles. Wind up torches are available.
- Try to avoid carrying a lit candle and don’t use a candle to go into confined spaces like a walk-in robe.
- Never use a candle for light when fueling equipment, such as a kerosene heater or lantern as the flame may ignite the fumes.
- Battery operated candles are a good and safe alternative to traditional candles.

Early detection is vital. 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 media enquiries telephone the MFS Media Line (08) 8204 3770**

**Further information:**

MFS Community Safety and Resilience Department **8204 3611** Country callers **1300 737 637**

For deaf and hearing impaired or teletype service **TTY 133 677**

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