

# media release

SA Metropolitan Fire Service



## Cold evenings a home fire risk

Wednesday, 29 June 2011

Despite a stretch of warm winter days, the Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) warns the community not to be complacent about home fire safety.

MFS District Officer of Community Safety, Allan Foster said the cold, crisp evenings create an increased risk of house fires.

“During winter, people turn to heaters, fireplaces, electric blankets, clothes dryers and preparing hot meals to help keep warm and comfortable.

“Each of these comforts brings with it a risk of house fire. The MFS urges everyone to follow our home fire safety tips to ensure they stay safe over the colder months,” District Officer Foster said.

Working smoke alarms are vital in providing early warning of a house fire, particularly at night.

“People lose their sense of smell when they sleep. Without working smoke alarms to alert them, they’re less likely to wake in time to escape a house fire,” Mr Foster said.

By following some simple tips, you can be **home fire safe** during colder weather:

- Keep heaters well clear from any items that might burn. Clearance from clothes, bedding, furniture, curtains and other combustibles should be two metres.
- Fixed heating equipment must be installed and maintained by a qualified tradesperson, in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions.
- Choose portable electric heaters with automatic safety switches that turn the heater off if it’s tipped over. Never leave portable heaters switched on in bedrooms overnight.
- Do not use portable electric heaters in wet areas to avoid the possibility of electric shock.
- Children and pets must be supervised when heaters are in use.
- Always use a fire screen in front of open fires and keep wood stove door(s) closed.
- Flues and chimneys should be professionally cleaned once a year to prevent a build up of flammable material.
- Ensure only approved fuel is used in liquid-fuelled heaters.
- Clean the lint filter in your clothes dryer every time you use it.
- Keep the oven and stove top clean, and when cooking roasts and casseroles, always use a timer to remind you to turn the appliance off
- When cooking, turn pot/pan handles inward so they cannot be knocked over and are out of the reach of children. (Note: Not over another element that is turned on.)

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

For more information on home fire safety, please visit [www.mfs.sa.gov.au](http://www.mfs.sa.gov.au) or call 1300 737 637.

**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.

[www.mfs.sa.gov.au](http://www.mfs.sa.gov.au)