

media release

SA Metropolitan Fire Service



Winter house fire risk begins

Friday, 31 May 2013

Tomorrow marks the start of winter and the Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) warns of the increased risk for winter house fires.

Each year, between 70 and 80 Australians die in preventable house fires. South Australia has recently recorded a number of significant house fires, including fires involving injuries or fatalities.

Last winter, Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) and Country Fire Service (CFS) firefighters responded to almost 280 house fires linked to cold-weather related causes.

MFS Commander of Community Safety and Resilience, Greg Howard said figures show cooking mishaps accounted for almost 80 % of those house fires.

“Unattended cooking is one of the most common causes of house fires. Over the last four years, four South Australians have died and a further 10 have been seriously injured due to cooking fires.”

“Each winter, MFS and CFS firefighters respond to hundreds of cooking fires. The damage these fires cause can range from partial or total house loss, through to burn injuries and fatalities.”

Fire Cause	Winter 2012
Cooking fires	221 fire incidents
Home heating fires*	47 fire incidents
Electric Blankets	6 fire incidents
Clothes Dryers	5 fire incidents
TOTAL (1 April to 30 September 2012)	279 winter related fires

*Home heating fires include wood fires, gas heaters, electric heaters, portable heaters, chimney/flue fires.

MFS Commander, Greg Howard said, “One of the key home fire safety messages I’d like people to remember this winter, is **NEVER** leave cooking unattended. If you leave the kitchen, turn the power off. And if a fat or oil fire starts, **NEVER** use water to put it out. Use a fire blanket, cooking utensil lid or a Dry Chemical Powder fire extinguisher.”

If you are not confident about extinguishing the fire or the fire does not go out within 60 seconds, the MFS urges people to close the kitchen door, evacuate the home and call Triple Zero.

The MFS urges all householders to follow these key cooking fire safety tips:

- **Never leave cooking unattended.**
- **Use extra caution when cooking with oils.** Heat cooking oils slowly.
- **Never throw water onto an oil or fat fire.** Use a fire blanket, cooking utensil lid or a Dry Chemical Powder fire extinguisher.
- **Never try to move a pan that has caught on fire.** This may result in spillage, injury and the spreading of fire.
- **If a fire occurs in the oven, turn the oven off and leave the oven door closed** to smother the fire. If the fire does not go out, evacuate your home before calling triple zero for help.

The MFS urges householders to buy a **fire blanket and a portable fire extinguisher** that meet the Australian Standard to keep them safe in the kitchen. A Dry Chemical Powder fire extinguisher with a minimum rating of 5B(E) is recommended.

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

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