



Home Fire Safety Fact Sheet

Fire Safety Equipment Disposal

The South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) recommends a range of fire safety practices in the home including the use of specific fire safety equipment. Each item of fire safety equipment has a unique purpose, maintenance regime and lifespan and should be disposed of appropriately.

MFS provides the following as a guide for the community to assist with disposal of equipment when its use is no longer reliable, or the product service life expires.

For more detailed information on the selection of the most appropriate fire safety equipment for your home refer to the MFS [fact sheets](#).

Smoke Alarms

Every home in South Australia is required by law to have working smoke alarms. Smoke alarms have a recommended service life of 10 years under normal operating conditions (Australian Standard 3786) after which time they should be replaced. This includes hard-wired 240V smoke alarms. Smoke alarms over the age of 10 years cannot be relied upon to wake the occupants of a home in the event of a fire.

The Radiation Protection Division of the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) reviewed legislation in the light of best practice in Australia and internationally. In early 2009 it was made legal in South Australia to dispose of small quantities of domestic smoke alarms that contain radioactive material in domestic waste. Ionisation smoke alarms contain radioactive material and are identified with the radiation symbol printed on them.

An exemption under the Act permits up to two domestic ionisation smoke alarms to be disposed into domestic waste during any seven day period.

For more information go to <http://www.epa.sa.gov.au> and search for 'Smoke Alarm disposal'.

Old photo-electric smoke alarms (no radiation symbol) can be safely discarded with normal domestic rubbish.

When replacing your smoke alarms refer to the MFS fact sheet [Smoke Alarms](#) for information on the best protection for your home.

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Specialised Smoke Alarm Systems for Deaf or Hearing Impaired

For those in the community who are Deaf or Hearing Impaired, specialised smoke alarms systems are available. These systems are comprised of a smoke alarm which meets the Australian Standard 3786, a vibrating pad for placing under a pillow and a flashing strobe light.

The smoke alarms contained in these systems must also be replaced completely every ten years and can be disposed of after that time into domestic waste.

The flashing strobe light and vibrating pad can be disposed of through electronic recycling centres in the community, refer to the Which Bin website and use the search phrase "Electronic Devices" for your nearest drop off centre: <https://www.whichbin.sa.gov.au/>.

Fire Blankets

Using a fire blanket is one of the safest ways to extinguish a flammable liquid burning in a container, for example oil or fat burning in a saucepan. A fire blanket must be disposed of and replaced after being used as they are not designed to be re-used. It can be dangerous to re-use a fire blanket if it's already extinguished a previous fire.

Always wait until the fire blanket has returned to room temperature or alternatively wet thoroughly with water after use. It can then be disposed of in normal domestic household waste.

The plastic casing or packaging of a fire blankets can be disposed of in the normal domestic household recycling waste.

When replacing your fire blanket refer to the MFS fact sheet [Fire Blankets](#) for information on the best protection for your home.

Fire Extinguishers

A fire extinguisher is a first attack tool for use in the early stages of a fire. It should only be used on a small fire (no larger than a waste-paper basket) and by someone who is confident and physically capable of using the extinguisher.

The MFS recommends that domestic fire extinguishers are maintained in good working order to provide the best outcome in the event of a fire. For information on the maintenance requirements for fire extinguishers, refer to the MFS fact sheet [Fire Extinguishers for Domestic Use](#).

The MFS recommends that ideally fire extinguishers for domestic use should be checked every six months and tested or replaced after five years.

The information provided here is to be used in the context of domestic fire extinguishers and does not apply for commercial situations.

Water Type Extinguisher (all red body)

Storage:

This type of fire extinguisher should be stored in a dry area and free from vibrations. In coastal or marine situations, check for saltwater corrosion and replace the extinguisher if corrosion is found to be present.

Disposal:

Water fire extinguishers, when empty, can be disposed of via a waste / recycling centre or scrap metal facility. Note that these centres may charge a disposal fee. For information on your nearest centre contact your local Council or refer to the Green Industries website: <https://www.greenindustries.sa.gov.au/hazwaste>. It is essential to ensure the extinguisher is discharged safely to avoid a hazard.

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Dry Chemical / Powder Type Extinguisher (Red body, white band)

Storage:

This type of fire extinguisher should be stored in a dry area and free from vibrations. Keep it away from products containing bleach. In coastal or marine situations, check for saltwater corrosion and replace the extinguisher if corrosion is found to be present.

Disposal:

Dry powder fire extinguishers can be disposed of via a waste / recycling centre. Note that these centres may charge a disposal fee. For information on your nearest centre contact your local Council or refer to the Green Industries website: <https://www.greenindustries.sa.gov.au/hazwaste>. Do not attempt to empty the extinguisher prior to disposal unless in the event of emergency use.

Carbon Dioxide (CO2) Type Fire Extinguisher (Red body, black band)

Storage:

This type of fire extinguisher should be stored in a dry area and free from vibrations. In coastal or marine situations, check for saltwater corrosion and replace the extinguisher if corrosion is found to be present.

Disposal:

Carbon Dioxide fire extinguishers can be disposed of via a waste / recycling centre. Note that these centres may charge a disposal fee. For information on your nearest centre contact your local Council or refer to the Green Industries website: <https://www.greenindustries.sa.gov.au/hazwaste>. Do not attempt to empty the extinguisher prior to disposal unless in the event of emergency use.

Foam Type Fire Extinguisher (Red body, blue band)

Storage:

This type of fire extinguisher should be stored in a dry area and free from vibrations. Keep it away from products containing bleach. In coastal or marine situations, check for saltwater corrosion and replace the extinguisher if corrosion is found to be present.

Disposal:

Foam fire extinguishers can be disposed of via a waste / recycling centre. Note that these centres may charge a disposal fee. For information on your nearest centre contact your local Council or refer to the Green Industries website: <https://www.greenindustries.sa.gov.au/hazwaste>. Do not attempt to empty the extinguisher prior to disposal unless in the event of emergency use.

Wet Chemical Type Fire Extinguisher (Red body, cream band)

Storage:

This type of fire extinguisher should be stored in a dry area and free from vibrations. Keep it away from products containing bleach. In coastal or marine situations, check for saltwater corrosion and replace the extinguisher if corrosion is found to be present.

Disposal:

Wet Chemical fire extinguishers can be disposed of via a waste / recycling centre. Note that these centres may charge a disposal fee. For information on your nearest centre contact your local Council or refer to the Green Industries website: <https://www.greenindustries.sa.gov.au/hazwaste>. Do not attempt to empty the extinguisher prior to disposal unless in the event of emergency use.

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BCF (Halon) or Vaporising Liquid Type Fire Extinguisher (All yellow body)

Since 1995 it has been illegal to own or use a domestic halon (BCF or BCM) fire extinguisher in Australia.

Disposal:

Should you have a domestic halon-based fire extinguisher, or find one, please hand it in to any Fire Station in South Australia for safe disposal.

These are the only types of fire extinguishers that the Fire Service accepts.

When replacing your fire extinguisher refer to the MFS fact sheet [Fire Extinguishers for Domestic Use](#) for information on the best protection for your home.

Quality Assurance

The information provided in this fact sheet is designed to be used as a guide when disposing of home fire safety equipment.

When replacing fire safety equipment in your home, the MFS recommends that you buy items which comply with the relevant Australian Standard.

Look for the Standards Australia 'five ticks' symbol on the packaging.

