



Media Release

SA Metropolitan Fire Service

PATH to reducing fire risk in hoarding properties

Monday, 7 June 2021

HOME FIRE SAFETY WEEK 1-7 JUNE 2021

The Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) has established a dedicated program that aims to help reduce the fire safety risk in the homes of people who hoard.

MFS firefighters developed the People and Their Hoarding (PATH) program to assist individuals, families, carers and service providers.

MFS Community Engagement Manager, Vinny Schar said sadly, it's estimated up to 24 % of house fire fatalities in Australia occur in hoarding properties.

"As firefighters, we recognise that we cannot influence a person's choice to hoard. Instead, the PATH program is about helping people who hoard – or their support network – to reduce the fire safety risk in hoarding properties.

"The PATH program is about treating people with dignity while helping to ensure they have suitable egress to escape if a fire occurs, and enough working smoke alarms to provide early warning if a fire occurs," MFS Community Engagement Manager Schar said.

The MFS PATH program is free, confidential and voluntary, and designed to assist residents, home care providers and other support agencies to enhance home fire safety.

MFS Community Engagement Officers can meet with care providers or individuals to discuss how to reduce the risk of a fire starting, and to develop strategies to improve a resident's ability to evacuate safely.

MFS Community Engagement Manager, Vinny Schar said there are common risks that are important to address in the homes of people who hoard:

- Ensuring there are working smoke alarms, and consider additional smoke alarms
- Ensuring there are clear paths to evacuate a home, including through unrestricted doors and windows
- Ensuring stove tops, ovens, adjacent bench tops and electrical items are clear of combustible items
- Ensuring minimum clearance of items around heaters and fireplaces
- Ensuring cigarettes or candles are not in use near combustible items or areas.

If people are concerned about their individual situation or a client's situation, they can **visit information on the [MFS website about the PATH program](#)**.

For further information, contact the MFS Community Engagement team on (08) 8204 3611 (Country callers: 1300 737 637) or email: samfscommunitysafety@sa.gov.au

For media enquiries please telephone the MFS Media Line on (08) 8204 3770

Members of the public should call the MFS Community Engagement Department on (08) 8204 3611 during business hours for further information. Country callers 1300 737 637.