

media release

SA Metropolitan Fire Service



Be safe while spring cleaning

Monday, 26 October 2020

Spring's arrival signifies the season to deep clean homes and clear out sheds and the Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) is reminding the public that common household items could be hidden fire hazards.

Every year the MFS and Country Fire Service (CFS) attend about 50 shed fires across South Australia. The most common causes of these fires are electrical-related.

Financial year	Total shed fires
2020 to date	7
2019 – 2020	46
2019 – 2018	54
2017 – 2018	46

MFS Community Engagement Officer Angelo Mastripolito said overloaded power boards or electrical items left charging without supervision in sheds could potentially start a fire.

“Firefighters sometimes respond to blazes in sheds that were not noticed by occupants until it is too late, resulting in irreparable damage and expensive cost,” MFS Community Engagement Officer Mastripolito said.

“Electrical items should never be left charging unsupervised and the community should not plug multiple power boards into each other.”

The MFS also warns that products in sheds such as fuel for power tools, cleaning chemicals, aerosols or paints may be flammable and reactive.

“Many people overlook the safety of products or chemicals stored in their sheds for years. Spring is the time to check on those items and make sure they are still safe to use,” MFS Community Engagement Officer Mastripolito said.

“Chemicals or flammable liquids should be stored in their original containers so the labels and proper safety precautions are visible.

“Some containers degrade over time and their contents may seep through so it is important to not store reactive chemicals together and dispose of old containers properly.”

More hazardous materials fire safety tips:

- Do not refuel lawn mowers, heaters or other tools when in use or when the appliance is still hot.
- Refuel or use hazardous chemicals in a well ventilated area to avoid the accumulation of volatile gases.
- Use a directional funnel to prevent spills and clean up any spills immediately.
- Do not use paint thinners, solvents, cleaning products or aerosols with flammable propellant gas in the vicinity of any open flames - e.g. lit candle, lit gas cooktop, gas pilot light.
- All flammable liquids must be stored in suitable containers and labelled appropriately. Food and drink containers, or glass containers, must not be used for the storage of fuels.
- If the product needs to be diluted before use, make up a sufficient supply for the day's activities. Any leftover material should be discarded appropriately unless it is to be kept in a properly-labelled container.
- Rags that have been used to clean up oils or oil-based paints could potentially self-heat and spontaneously combust. They should be immersed in water or spread out in a safe place to dry immediately after use.

For further information, please access our MFS Home Fire and Life Safety Fact Sheets on Hazardous Materials at www.mfs.sa.gov.au.

For media enquiries and interviews call the MFS Media Line on (08) 8204 3770

www.mfs.sa.gov.au

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