

# media release

SA Metropolitan Fire Service



## Limit the risk of child fires these holidays

Thursday, 24 January 2013

As the final days of school holidays approach, the Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) reminds parents to monitor how children are occupying their time.

It is also vitally important to keep lighters and matches out of the reach of young children.

Each year, MFS firefighters and CFS volunteers respond to significant fires across SA accidentally caused by young people and inquisitive children playing with fire. Tragically in 2010 and 2011, two young children perished in separate fires.

MFS Commander of Community Safety and Resilience, Allan Foster said that it is very important for parents and caregivers to teach their children about the dangers of fire.

“Holiday time provides children with plenty of free time, and it’s not always possible for parents or caregivers to supervise children every single moment. The MFS encourages parents to keep children occupied with activities, to limit the possibility of a child getting into danger,” Commander Foster said.

With younger children it is very important to keep lighters and matches well out of the reach of children.

“Every year firefighters respond to significant fires accidentally caused by curious children who’ve found lighters or matches lying around the home. It is the responsibility of parents and guardians to ensure lighters and matches are not left in sight or in places easily accessed by children.”

The MFS provides a special **Juvenile Firefighters Intervention Program (JFLIP)** to assist families in addressing the problem of children and young people who are playing with fire.

Parents or guardians who are concerned about their child’s or children’s interest or activity with fire should ring the MFS on 1300 737 637 to enquire about the program (during business hours).

**JFLIP** is delivered by operational MFS firefighters who have been specially trained to work with children. **The program is free and completely confidential.**

The MFS recommends the following safety tips for parents, carers, friends and relatives:

- **Keep matches, lighters and fire starters well out of reach of children.** Storage above adult shoulder height and out of sight is recommended.
- Teach young children that they must never touch matches and lighters. They must notify an adult if they see them lying around. Praise children when they do so.
- Wherever possible avoid using candles if you have young children. Torches and battery powered artificial candles are recommended as a safer option.
- If you must use candles, keep them up high, out of reach of children. Never leave children or pets in a room with a candle burning. A child should not sleep in a room with a lit candle.
- Ensure your family has a Home Fire Escape Plan. Practise the plan with the children to ensure everyone understands what to do in the event of a fire.

The MFS urges families to combine the above safety tips with interconnected, photo-electric smoke alarms that are less than 10 years old.

**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)