

media release

SA Metropolitan Fire Service



Overnight fires highlight need for a Home “Fire Escape Plan” and home security concerns

Friday 29 April 2011

Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) Firefighters responded to two separate fires overnight involving home security.

In trying to keep intruders and burglars out of our homes, we often overlook the need to escape ourselves in the event of fire. There are many security devices which prevent intruders from getting in or thieves removing goods. In a fire situation, the danger is that these security devices may prevent you and your family from getting out safely.

The MFS has attended many house fires where the escape has been hindered by security devices. In some cases victims have been found inside dead-locked doors, obviously unable to find the key and use the door as an exit.

The MFS strongly recommends the following strategies concerning home security and fire safety:

- Windows and security devices must be easy to open from the inside to allow a quick escape. Windows with security devices should incorporate quick release mechanisms.
- Make sure everyone can operate security barred doors and windows.
- Install deadlocks which can be opened from the inside without keys.
- Do not deadlock your doors when you are at home unless you are prepared to leave the key in the lock. If there are glass panes in the door, consider leaving door keys on a hook in the centre of the door, out of reach of potential intruders. Looking for keys and trying to fit them into locks in a smoke filled environment is likely to cost you your life.
- Limit the number of keys needed to open deadlocks. Have all your dead-locks keyed alike.
- Install and maintain smoke alarms that are photo-electric, hard wired and interconnected with one another to provide early warning of fire.
- All the people in your home should talk about and plan how to get out in the event of a fire. Prepare and practise a **Home Fire Escape Plan**.

The MFS urges householders to combine the above safety tips with reliable, working 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