

# media release

SA Metropolitan Fire Service



## Prevent air conditioner fires this summer

Tuesday, 16 October 2012

With the onset of warmer weather, the Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) reminds that it's time for householders to have their electrical cooling equipment serviced ahead of summer.

MFS Commander of Community Safety, Allan Foster said poorly maintained equipment has the potential to cause a house fire that could claim property or lives.

"Each summer our Fire Cause Investigators sift through the remains of homes lost to fires caused by faulty air cooling equipment.

"Having your air conditioners and evaporative coolers serviced by a qualified tradesperson ahead of hot weather can help your family enjoy a safe, cool summer," Commander Foster said.

The MFS advises that if electrical cooling equipment is used continuously for long periods during heatwave events, there is a danger of the equipment overheating and causing a fire.

Commander Foster said, "If you suspect your electrical cooling equipment is showing signs of overheating, the MFS recommends giving the equipment a rest.

"It's advisable to have a spare, well maintained fan at home that can keep you comfortable while equipment that has overheated has a chance to cool down," he said.

**Importantly**, the MFS **does not discourage** the use of electrical air cooling equipment as it can be a necessary health requirement for the elderly or families with young children.

You can reduce the potential for fire in the following ways:

- Electrical cooling equipment such as air conditioners and evaporative coolers should be installed by a qualified tradesperson in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- All electrical cooling equipment, both permanently installed systems and portable equipment, should be regularly serviced by a licensed tradesperson according to the manufacturer's specifications.
- Arrange to have your equipment serviced before the start of summer so that it is fully functional when the hot weather begins.  
Ask the tradesperson to check for faults, remove any build up of dust or combustible material and ensure the equipment is in good working order.
- Do not leave your air cooling equipment running unattended while not at home.
- Watch for signs of your electrical cooling equipment overheating. Keep a spare, well maintained fan that can keep you cool while resting overheated cooling equipment.
- If you have an older air conditioner without a regulating thermostat, consider replacing it with one that has a regulating thermostat.
- Keep portable electrical cooling equipment away from wet areas to avoid the possibility of electric shock.
- Children must be supervised when cooling equipment is in use. Keep an eye on children and pets, particularly when portable equipment is within reach.

The MFS urges householders to combine the above safety tips with photo-electric smoke alarms that are less than 10 years old and a Home Fire Escape Plan.

**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)