

media release



Deadly winter house fire season arrives

Saturday, 15 May 2010

With winter on our doorstep, South Australia's fire services are bracing for a busy house fire season, warning homes and lives could be lost through simple mistakes.

Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) District Officer, Allan Foster says the risk of fatal house fires increases during the colder months when the fire services tend to see a rise in house fires.

"It takes about four minutes for a fire to engulf a modern home, creating instant and extreme danger to occupants. Statistics show that on average, more people die in house fires in South Australia each year than they do in bushfires.

"We've already seen two homes lost in heater fires in recent weeks. This highlights that the potential for injuries, life and property loss this winter is very real," Mr Foster says.

Country Fire Service (CFS) Manager, Prevention Services, Leigh Miller says one of the frightening realities of house fires is that they can occur at night while adults and children sleep.

"What people don't realise is that they lose their sense of smell while asleep. Without working smoke alarms for early detection, they're less likely to wake in time to escape or alert others," Mr Miller says.

Last winter, more than a dozen people evacuated their homes due to fires caused by heaters, electric blankets, fireplaces and clothes dryers.

MFS District Officer, Allan Foster says by following some simple tips, you can be **home fire safe** this winter:

- Keep heaters well clear from any items that might burn. Clearance from clothes, bedding, furniture, curtains and other combustibles should be two metres. Two giant, adult steps is a good rule of thumb.
- Heating equipment must be installed and maintained by a qualified tradesperson, in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- Choose portable electric heaters with automatic safety switches that turn the heater off if it's tipped over.
- Do not use portable electric heaters in wet areas to avoid the possibility of electric shock.
- Children and pets must be supervised when heaters are in use.
- Always use a fire screen in front of open fires and close potbelly stove door(s).
- Flues and chimneys should be cleaned once a year to prevent a build up of flammable material and ensure the fire burns properly.
- Ensure only approved fuel is used in liquid-fuelled heaters.
- Clean the lint filter in your clothes dryer every time you use it.
- Keep the oven and stove top clean, and when cooking roasts and casseroles, always use a timer to remind you to turn the appliance off.

Early fire detection is vital. The fire services urge householders to combine the above safety tips with reliable, working smoke alarms that are less than 10 years old and a Home Fire Escape Plan.

For more information on home fire safety, please visit the [MFS website](#)

**For media enquiries telephone the
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Further information:

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