

# media release

SA Metropolitan Fire Service



## Heater fire signals winter house fire threat

Thursday, 15 April 2010

A heater fire that destroyed an Adelaide home last night is a warning to all householders that the winter house fire danger season has arrived early.

Twenty Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) firefighters from five appliances responded to the fire at a cottage on Henry St, Maylands just after 6.40 pm last night.

MFS Fire Investigator, Phil Kilsby determined the blaze was caused by a heater placed too close to a lounge chair. Damage is estimated at \$250,000.

“We’re starting to experience colder nights. Unfortunately colder weather tends to signal an increase in house fires, and these fires have the potential to destroy homes, injure and claim lives.

“Last year, more than a dozen people evacuated their homes because of fires caused by heaters, electric blankets, fireplaces and clothes dryers. We don’t want to see a repeat this year,” Mr Kilsby says.

The MFS says by following some simple tips, people can be **home fire safe** in the colder months:

- **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.
- 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.

The MFS urges householders to combine the above safety tips with reliable, working smoke alarms that are less than 10 years old - as early fire detection is vital.

**For more information on home fire safety, please visit the MFS website at:**

[http://www.mfs.sa.gov.au/site/community\\_safety/home\\_fire\\_safety\\_information\\_sheets\\_domestic.jsp](http://www.mfs.sa.gov.au/site/community_safety/home_fire_safety_information_sheets_domestic.jsp)

**For media enquiries please telephone 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)