

media release

SA Metropolitan Fire Service



MFS launches Home Fire Safety Week with smoke alarm warning

Friday, 1 June 2018

As the Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) launches **Home Fire Safety Week**, it's celebrating more than two decades of domestic smoke alarm legislation – while urging against complacency.

The advent of compulsory smoke alarms in 1995 reduced the prevalence of injuries, property and life loss in house fires across the state, but statistics show many householders are still taking risks.

MFS Acting Chief Officer, Michael Morgan said MFS Fire Cause Investigators have found that up to 45 % of South Australian homes that experience a significant house fire* don't have working smoke alarms.

“While smoke alarm legislation has greatly improved home fire safety for South Australians, we're imploring all to ensure they have working smoke alarms as the winter house fire season begins. It's a simple task that can provide early warning of a fire, saving lives, homes and precious belongings.”

“Statistics show that a lack of working smoke alarms puts householders at about 80 % greater risk of losing part or all of their home to fire, and at about 80 % greater risk of dying in a house fire,” MFS Acting Chief Officer Morgan said.

Minister for Emergency Services, Corey Wingard said as the busy winter house fire season begins, South Australians must test, check and, if necessary, replace their smoke alarms altogether.

“Before smoke alarm legislation was enacted 23 years ago, MFS and Country Fire Service (CFS) firefighters would routinely have to search for and rescue people from well involved house fires.”

“Thankfully, firefighters now tend to arrive to the comforting sight of all occupants safely on the kerb, rather than trapped inside a burning home. But, without working smoke alarms, householders are risking it all,” Minister Wingard said.

Only working smoke alarms will activate in the event of a house fire. All smoke alarms in South Australian homes must comply with the Australian Standard (AS3786).

The MFS and CFS recommend the following smoke alarm maintenance as winter begins:

- Press the test button once a month, and on return from extended absence to ensure the smoke alarm is working.
- Test the backup battery of a hard-wired alarm by isolating the power supply before pushing the test button.
- At least every six months, using the soft brush attachment of a vacuum cleaner remove dust and cobwebs from the outside of the smoke alarm.
- Change any replaceable backup batteries once a year or if a 'battery-low' warning chirp is emitted.

CFS Chief Officer, Greg Nettleton reinforced that smoke alarms have a limited lifespan and regardless of their power source, should be completely replaced every ten years.

“When replacing the smoke alarm all fire services recommend that the best protection is provided by photo-electric smoke alarms which are hard-wired to the 240 volt power supply and interconnected to give the earliest warning possible,” CFS Chief Officer Nettleton said.

The MFS and CFS urge householders to combine the above smoke alarm safety tips with a practised [Home Fire Escape Plan](#).

For media enquiries please telephone the MFS Media Line on (08) 8204 3770

Members of the public should call the MFS Community Education Department on (08) 8204 3611 during business hours for further information. Country callers 1300 737 637.

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The theme of **MFS Home Fire Safety Week** is '**Your life, your plan**'. Launch Hashtags include: [#SmokeAlarmsSaveLives](#) [#TestYourSmokeAlarms](#) [#TensTooOld](#) [#YourLifeYourPlan](#)

**A significant house fire is one with a damage bill of \$40,000 or more that is investigated by MFS Fire Cause Investigators*

Media Note: Media are welcome to attend the launch of MFS Home Fire Safety Week at Adelaide Fire Station (99 Wakefield St, Adelaide) at 10.30 am on Friday, 1 June 2018. The Minister, MFS and CFS spokespersons will be available for interview.

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