

# media release

SA Metropolitan Fire Service



## Fire spate prompts shed & garage fire safety warning

Monday, 8 October 2018

A spate of costly shed and garage fires has prompted the Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) to issue a fire safety warning.

Over the weekend, three fires at Elizabeth Downs, Para Hills West and Ottoway left a damage bill of \$180,000.

The Elizabeth Downs fire is believed caused by a spark from a power tool igniting combustibles in a car, while the Ottoway fire is thought to be caused by cooking left unattended in a shed.

The weekend fires follow a \$30,000 blaze at Unley last week that claimed two sheds and left a man in hospital with burns, with the incident linked to an LPG cylinder accident.

MFS Commander of Community Safety and Resilience, Greg Howard said sheds and garages often house a mixture of dangerous items that could lead to fires.

“Sheds and garages are often stocked with dangerous items such as LPG cylinders, paint thinners, oils, fuel, butane cans, pool and cleaning chemicals and power tools. Some sheds or garages are also used as sleep-outs and have cooking facilities, which brings added risks.”

“We’re urging the community to be mindful of what their sheds and garages contain, and to have safe procedures when using power tools, handling chemicals, fuel, oil or gas cylinders. If your shed or garage is used as a sleep-out, we strongly encourage you to install a working smoke alarm,” MFS Commander Howard said.

The MFS reminds the public of the following key safety tips for sheds and garages:

- NEVER tinker with LPG or other gas cylinders. If you’re unsure of the age, condition or contents of a cylinder, discontinue using them and replace them with a new cylinder in good condition.
- Be aware that sparks can ignite fuel, paint thinners, cleaning products or solvents or their vapour, leading to a fire. Refuel and use fuel only in a well-ventilated area and **not** near any open flame.
- Ensure any work you conduct that might cause sparks is well clear of any combustibles.
- Do not refuel lawn mowers or other tools while the appliance is running or still hot.
- Use a directional funnel to prevent fuel spills and clean up spills immediately. Do not overfill containers or tanks.
- Do not smoke while refuelling a lawn mower or other tools.
- Granular pool chlorine must be stored away from fuels, oils, brake fluid or detergents due to the risk of fire, including if containers disintegrate over time.
- Rags that have been used with petrol, methylated spirits, turpentine, white spirit, acetone, solvent based glues and petroleum based paint thinners should be dried in a well ventilated area (to remove the volatile gases) before disposal.
- Rags that have been used with drying oils such as linseed oil or oil-based paints may self-heat and spontaneously ignite. Immerse rags in water or spread out in a safe place to dry immediately after use.

The MFS provides comprehensive home fire safety tips on [hazardous materials](#), [barbeques](#), [electrical hazards](#), [self heating and spontaneous ignition](#) and [cooking](#) at [www.mfs.sa.gov.au](http://www.mfs.sa.gov.au)

**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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