

# media release

SA Metropolitan Fire Service



## MFS cautions online Christmas shoppers

Wednesday, 12 December 2018

With Christmas around the corner, the Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) is warning of the potential risks of purchasing electronic gifts online from overseas.

MFS Community Safety Commander Phil Crossley said many Australians may look to make online purchases of electrical items for loved ones this Christmas.

“The MFS is urging caution when buying electronic items. If bought within Australia from a reputable company, then your item should meet Australian Standards.”

“But, if buying online from overseas, there is the risk you might unknowingly be purchasing an inferior quality gift or an imitation product that doesn’t meet Australian Standards. That can then bring with it the risk of a fire being sparked by a sub-standard electrical product,” MFS Commander Crossley said.

If a product comes with a battery-charging device, the MFS urges the public to ensure that any spare batteries purchased for the device are compatible with the electronic gift and charger.

“You must be mindful that batteries purchased overseas may not be made to the same standard and quality that we have in Australia, which in itself may pose a risk.”

“Ensure you follow the manufacturer’s instructions when purchasing any aftermarket items, including batteries, to ensure they are compatible. Not doing so brings an increased risk of failure, which could ultimately put yourself or a loved one at risk of experiencing a fire,” MFS Commander Crossley explains.

The MFS provides the following safety tips for online Christmas shoppers:

- When shopping online, buy from a reputable company that sells products that meet Australian Standards.
- To find out if a product meets Australian Standards, look for a Regulatory Compliance Mark and/or the Standards Australia 'five ticks' symbol on the product or packaging.
- Ensure you purchase a gift that’s suitable for the age of the person you’re buying for, to limit the risk of injury or misuse. Some items might not be suitable for young children or the elderly.
- Ensure that any spare charging devices and batteries you purchase are compatible with the electronic item purchased. Incorrect chargers or batteries may present a fire risk.
- NEVER use or charge electrical items or batteries on bedding or flammable furniture such as sofas and armchairs due to the risk of a fire starting.
- Charging an electrical item or batteries generates heat. Always recharge in a well-ventilated area on a non-flammable surface that’s well clear of combustibles to prevent a fire starting.
- AVOID leaving devices on charge for extended periods beyond what they’re designed for due to the risk of overheating and a fire starting.
- NEVER overload electrical power boards. Always use or recharge an electrical item safely using power supply that’s not overloaded with items or with piggy-backed power boards.

**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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