

media release

SA Metropolitan Fire Service



Home heating danger as SA enters cold snap

HOME FIRE SAFETY WEEK - Tuesday, 4 June 2019

South Australians risk losing their homes and potentially their lives if using heaters incorrectly this winter the Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) warns.

Over the past four years MFS and Country Fire Service (CFS) firefighters have battled 139 house fires linked to heaters, solid fuel fires and open fires.

MFS Commander of Community Safety and Resilience Phil Crossley said many of those incidents have a common link.

“One of the leading causes of home heating fires is having clothes, bedding or other flammable items too close to heaters and open fires.

“Our rule of thumb is to keep anything flammable **two metres from the heater** this winter. That’s because beds, curtains, furniture and clothes hung on clothes airers can too easily catch alight,” MFS Commander Crossley said.

The MFS warns that leaving a heater switched on too close to your bed while you sleep is dangerous and poses a significant house fire risk.

MFS Commander Phil Crossley said, “People can become too hot in their sleep, kick bedding off and continue to sleep. If a heater is too close, that can result in your bedding touching the heater, causing your bed and bedroom to catch alight. It’s a situation that could quickly turn fatal”.

The MFS provides the following home fire safety tips for safe heating this winter:

- Keep any items that can burn well clear of heaters and fires. Clearance from clothes, bedding, furniture, curtains and other combustibles should be at least **two metres**.
- Clothes airers placed around or near heaters and open or solid fuel fires are a high fire risk. If they fall over, clothing can end up dangerously close to the heater.
- Turn heating equipment off when you leave the house, and do not leave portable heaters running for extended periods.
- Discontinue using any faulty heating equipment immediately. Have it repaired by a qualified tradesperson or replace it with a new item.

Portable heaters

- Choose a portable heater that has an automatic safety switch that turns the heater off if it is knocked over.

Early detection is vital. The MFS urges householders to combine these safety tips with hardwired, interconnected smoke alarms that are less than 10 years old and a Home Fire Escape Plan.

MFS Home Fire Safety Week runs from Friday, 31 May until Thursday, 6 June 2019.

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.

www.mfs.sa.gov.au

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