

media release

SA Metropolitan Fire Service



\$540K property damage prompts MFS air cooling safety warning

Wednesday, 30 October 2019

In the wake of an estimated \$540,000 damage bill from fires attributed to faulty cooling equipment, the Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) urges the public to have their equipment serviced before use this summer.

Since December 2018, the MFS has attended 30 fires caused by air conditioners, evaporative coolers and fans, resulting in this significant property damage bill.

MFS Community Engagement Officer, Phil Evans explained that many of the fires could have been avoided if the proper maintenance and care was taken before use.

“With spring heating up and as we head into summer, it’s vital that people get their air cooling equipment, both permanently installed systems and portable equipment, serviced by a professional according to the manufacturer’s instructions.

“It’s important that they are checked for faults, have clean evaporation pads and air filters and are mechanically sound to avoid the potential for a fire to start within your home or business. Ultimately, it’s about keeping those you care about safe.”

MFS Community Engagement Officer, Phil Evans said, “Unfortunately some people miss or ignore the warning signs when an air conditioner or evaporative cooler begins to fail. If it’s making an unusual noise, keeps shutting itself down or is not operating as it should, that’s a sign you should stop using it until it’s been serviced by a qualified tradesperson”.

The MFS also advises to never leave your cooling equipment running unattended while you’re not at home.

Importantly, the MFS **does not discourage** the use of electrical air cooling equipment as it can be a necessary health requirement for the elderly or families with young children.

You can reduce the potential for fire in the following ways:

- All electrical cooling equipment should be installed and regularly serviced by a licensed tradesperson according to the manufacturer’s specifications.
- Ask the tradesperson to check for faults, remove any build-up of dust or combustible material and ensure the equipment is in good working order.
- Watch for signs of your portable electrical cooling equipment overheating. Make use of a spare, well maintained fan whilst allowing portable equipment to cool down.
- If you have an older air conditioner without a regulating thermostat, consider replacing it with one that has a regulating thermostat.
- Children must be supervised when using portable cooling equipment that is within their reach.
- Keep portable electrical cooling equipment away from wet areas to avoid the possibility of electric shock.

The fire service urges householders to combine the above safety tips with working, interconnected smoke alarms that are less than 10 years old and a 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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