

Earth Hour house fire risk

Friday, 26 March 2010

As South Australians prepare to flick the switch for Earth Hour, the Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) urges people to be home fire safe.

The MFS supports the global environmental initiative but warns of an increased risk of house fires if people use candles as a light source.

District Officer, Allan Foster of the MFS Community Safety Department says that people can ensure they have a safe night tomorrow by taking a few precautions.

“Use torches instead of candles; they’re a much safer light source. If a candle is left unattended, the open flame can easily cause a house fire.

“The fire risk increases when you add children or pets into the mix as candles can be knocked over,” Mr Foster says.

If people decide to use candles the MFS says to keep them up high, out of reach of children and never leave a child or pet alone in a room with a candle.

If people choose to brighten Earth Hour with candles, there are some simple ‘home fire safe’ tips:

- Use candles only with constant adult supervision
- Keep the immediate area around a candle clear of all items, especially items that can catch fire, such as clothing, books, paper, tablecloths
- Do not place lit candles in windows, where blinds or curtains can close over them
- Make sure candles are placed in sturdy holders that will not tip over, and place them on a secure piece of heat-resistant furniture. Candle holders must be non-combustible
- Do not use candles in places where they can be knocked over by children or pets
- Extinguish all candles when leaving a room or going to sleep
- Keep candles and all open flames away from flammable liquids.

Mr Foster also warns people not to use their fuse box to turn household lights off, as this may disable their smoke alarms if back-up batteries have gone flat.

For more information about **home fire safety** and **candle safety** visit the MFS website:
http://www.mfs.sa.gov.au/site/community_safety/home_fire_safety_information_sheets_domestic

Media wishing to interview Allan Foster should contact the MFS Media Line (listed below).

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

Further information:

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

www.mfs.sa.gov.au