

media release

SA Metropolitan Fire Service



Tragic reminder ahead of school holidays

Tuesday, 30 November 2010

With school holidays due to begin next week, the Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) is urging people to take care with children and fire safety around the home.

A tragic car fire in Mount Gambier late yesterday afternoon claimed the life of a young child, devastating a family and local community.

Two MFS appliances and eight firefighters responded to the incident, along with SA Police and ambulance officers. MFS and SAPOL Fire Cause Investigators from Adelaide flew to Mount Gambier to investigate and found that the incident was probably caused by child fire play with a lighter.

MFS Fire Cause Investigator, Phil Kilsby said the Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) responds to several accidental house fires each year caused by children playing with fire lighting implements such as matches and lighters.

The MFS offers a program to help families solve the problem of unsafe children's fire play. Families are encouraged to call 1300 737 637 to access the Juvenile Firelighters Intervention Program (JFLIP).

The MFS recommends the following home fire safety tips for parents, guardians, friends and relatives who may look after children or have children in their home over the school holidays:

- Keep matches, lighters and fire starters well out of reach of children. Storage above adult shoulder height and out of sight is recommended.
- Supervise children when cooking in the kitchen and have a fire blanket and dry powder (chemical) fire extinguisher readily available.
- If you choose to use candles, keep candles up high, out of reach of children. Torches and battery powered faux candles are recommended as a safer option.
- Never leave a child in a room with a candle burning. A child should not sleep in a room with a lit candle.
- Ensure your family has a Home Fire Escape Plan. Practise the plan to ensure everyone understands what to do in the event of a fire.
- Children tend to hide from a house fire in a cupboard or under a bed. Make sure that the children in your household are instructed in the dangers of doing this. Make sure they understand your Home Fire Escape Plan.

The MFS urges householders to combine the above safety tips with working smoke alarms that are less than 10 years old.

For more home fire safety information, visit www.mfs.sa.gov.au or call the MFS on 1300 737 637.

For media enquiries and interviews call the MFS Media Line on (08) 8204 3770

Further information for the public:

Call the MFS Community Education Department on (08) 8204 3611 during business hours.
Country callers 1300 737 637.

www.mfs.sa.gov.au