

media release

SA Metropolitan Fire Service



Change your clocks, Change your smoke alarm batteries

Monday, 26 March 2018

South Australians are reminded to change their smoke alarm batteries as they turn back their clocks at the end of daylight saving this weekend.

Only working smoke alarms save lives and the Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) and Country Fire Service (CFS) are urging the community to ensure their smoke alarms are reliable.

Each year at the end of daylight saving all smoke alarms require the following actions:

- Replaceable smoke alarm batteries should be changed every year at the end of daylight saving, and whenever a 'battery-low' warning beep is heard. Hard-wired smoke alarms may also have replaceable backup batteries.
- Check the age of your smoke alarm. Smoke alarms should be replaced every ten years as they become less reliable beyond this age. The date is printed on the smoke alarm.

A review of South Australian house fire statistics revealed that 35 % of incidents across South Australia involved homes where smoke alarms had been disabled or batteries were flat. In some worrying cases, smoke alarms may have been removed or not fitted at all.

South Australia's Fire Services say these figures send a strong message to all households of the importance of replacing smoke alarm batteries annually and ensuring you have working smoke alarms.

Financial Year	No. of incidents	Smoke alarms present & working*	Smoke alarms not present or disabled*
2016-17	120	78 (65 %)	42 (35%)
2017-18 <i>as at 26 March 2018</i>	121	78 (65 %)	43 (35%)

**Figures cover MFS and CFS house fires investigated by MFS Fire Investigators with damage bill in excess of \$40,000*

MFS Station Officer, Vinny Schar said, "While some in our community are aware, most people don't realise that when you sleep your sense of smell is significantly diminished.

"Smoke alarms give people early warning of a house fire, providing vital minutes to escape and call the fire service, and giving firefighters a greater chance to save homes and belongings.

"All smoke alarms, regardless of whether they are battery powered or hard-wired, should be replaced every ten years. The smoke alarm age can be checked by looking on the smoke alarm itself as the Australian Standard (AS3786) requires that there is a date stamp printed on them," said MFS Station Officer Schar.

CFS State Duty Commander, Yvette Dowling said, "It only takes a few moments to change the batteries and check the age of the smoke alarm to ensure that the first step in your home fire escape plan is taken care of.

"Only working smoke alarms save lives. Every second counts when you or your family are trying to escape a house fire, so the more you prepare the more likely you are to survive," said CFS State Duty Commander Dowling.

The MFS and CFS urge householders to combine the above smoke alarm safety tips with a practised [Home Fire Escape Plan](#).

**For media enquiries telephone the
MFS Media Line (08) 8204 3770 or CFS Media Line on (08) 8115 3531**

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.