

# media release

SA Metropolitan Fire Service



## Candle fire frequency prompts MFS warning

Friday, 18 May 2018

With firefighters battling seven significant house fires with a combined damage of almost \$1m linked to candles in the last 12 months in South Australia, the Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) is urging the public to be more vigilant.

MFS Commander of Community Safety and Resilience, Greg Howard said a candle's open flame can easily spread to nearby combustible materials if left unattended.

"Candles are very popular, however the decision to use them is one that must be made with safety in mind. Firefighters respond on average to three house fires caused by candles every month, causing unnecessary trauma for families, along with significant damage."

"If you do choose to use a candle, then always make sure it is in a sturdy holder, on a stable non-combustible surface and well away from anything that can catch alight, for example curtains, furnishings and paper."

MFS Commander Howard said, "Firefighters recommend substituting real candles with the flameless variety including battery operated imitation candles, plug in candle warmers, scented sticks or reed diffusers. If it's light you're looking for then perhaps use a torch, particularly where children are nearby."

If people choose to use candles, here are some simple **home fire safety** tips to follow:

- Battery operated flameless candles are a good and safe alternative to traditional candles
- Use traditional flame 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, bedding, books, paper, tablecloths, curtains
- 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.

Early detection is vital. The MFS urges householders to combine the above safety tips with interconnected photo-electric smoke alarms that are less than 10 years old and a Home Fire Escape Plan.

For more information on home fire and life safety, please visit [www.mfs.sa.gov.au](http://www.mfs.sa.gov.au)

**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](http://www.mfs.sa.gov.au)

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