

media release

SA Metropolitan Fire Service



'Two metres from the heater' as winter chill sets in

MFS HOME FIRE SAFETY WEEK - Sunday, 3 June 2018

As the winter chill sets in across South Australia, the Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) warns of the potential for a spate of dangerous home heating fires.

In the past three years, MFS and Country Fire Service (CFS) firefighters have battled 113 house fires linked to home heating mishaps across the state.

TYPE OF FIRE	HOUSE FIRES OVER PAST 3 CALENDAR YEARS	12 MONTH AVERAGE
Heater (gas, electric & 'other')	67 fires	22.3 fires
Solid fuel heater or open fire	46 fires	15.3 fires
TOTAL FIRES	113 fires	37.6 fires

MFS Assistant Chief Fire Officer of Community Safety and Resilience, Glenn Benham said leaving furniture, bedding, clothing, washing and other combustibles 'two metres from the heater' is ideal.

"One of the common causes of home heating fires is people leaving their heaters too close to combustibles – including clothes horses full of washing. That's why we're strongly reinforcing the 'two metres from the heater' rule."

"Another key risk involves a lack of maintenance. Over time, chimneys and flues can disintegrate or become clogged. Gas and electric heaters can develop faults or become damaged. Always enlist a qualified tradesperson to clean, inspect, repair and maintain," MFS ACFO Benham said.

Key MFS home heating fire safety tips include:

All Heating

- Keep any items that can burn well clear of heaters and fires. Clearance from clothes, bedding, furniture, curtains and other combustibles ideally should be two metres.
- Clothes airers placed around or near heaters and open or solid fuel fires are a high fire risk. If they fall over, clothing can become dangerously close to the heater.
- Turn heating equipment off when you leave the house, and do not leave portable heaters running for extended periods of time unless the appliance is specifically designed for that purpose.
- Discontinue using any faulty heating equipment immediately. Have it repaired by a qualified tradesperson or replace it with a new item.

Portable heaters

- Choose a portable heater that has an automatic safety switch that turns the heater off if it is tipped over.

Open and solid fuel fires

- Always use a full-size fire screen in front of open fires to prevent sparks or embers from coming into contact with carpet, furniture or other flammable items.
- Never place hot ashes in household bins, plastic buckets or council bins. Have a metal bucket that you only use for ash. Let the ash cool completely before disposing of it.
- Flues and chimneys usually pass through roof spaces to vent smoke and gas and they become hot when the fire or heater is in use. Roof spaces should be inspected regularly to ensure that rubbish in the roof space (vermin, nests, leaves, dust etc) has not accumulated around chimneys and flues, and to ensure that the chimney and any protective shrouding is still intact.

Early detection's vital. The MFS urges householders to combine these safety tips with interconnected photo-electric 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

MFS Home Fire Safety Week runs from Friday, 1 June through to Thursday, 7 June 2018.

The theme of **MFS Home Fire Safety Week** is '**Your life, your plan**'. Hashtags include:
[#TwoMetresFromTheHeater](#) [#WarmUpDontBurnDown](#) [#YourLifeYourPlan](#) [#HomeFireSafetyWeek](#)

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