

media release

SA Metropolitan Fire Service



Cooking – the leading winter house fire danger

MFS Home Fire Safety Week – Thursday, 7 June 2018

With cooking the leading winter house fire danger, the Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) is urging South Australians to *keep looking when cooking*.

MFS and Country Fire Service (CFS) firefighters have battled 826 cooking related fires over the past three calendar years, with damage ranging from partial to total house loss.

TYPE OF FIRE	FIRES OVER PAST 3 CALENDAR YEARS	12 MONTH AVERAGE
Cooking / kitchen fires	826 fires	275.3 fires

MFS Community Safety Officer, Vinny Schar said between 70 and 80 people die in preventable house fires across Australia each year, while an estimated 2,000 people are injured.

“With cooking fires the leading cause of winter related house fires, the MFS urges the community to *keep looking when cooking* this winter. Or, in other words, to *stand by your pan*. They’re simple but effective safety messages that everyone can stick to.”

“Distractions are a major cause of cooking fires. So, if you’re prone to being distracted by the TV, loved ones, your phone or social media, set a timer with a loud alarm that will ensure you don’t leave food too long in the oven or on the stove,” MFS Station Officer Schar said.

The MFS urges householders to store a dry chemical powder fire extinguisher with a minimum 5B(E) rating and a fire blanket near the kitchen to help prevent small kitchen fires from getting out of control.

MFS Station Officer Schar said, “But, if you’re not confident of battling the fire or if it grows too large, simply turn the oven or stove off - if it’s safe to do so - before evacuating and calling 000 (Triple Zero)”.

Another key risk is oil and fat fires. The MFS instructs; NEVER put water on an oil or fat fire and NEVER try to move a pan that’s caught alight.

The MFS urges all householders to follow these tips:

- Never leave the kitchen when you are cooking.
- Never throw water onto an oil or fat fire.
 - Use a fire blanket or a Dry Chemical Powder fire extinguisher to smother the flames.
Note: If you do not have a fire blanket or an extinguisher protect your hands and use a utensil lid or a solid bread board to smother the fire. Keep the utensil lid on the benchtop for this purpose.
 - Then turn off the heat.
 - Call the fire service on 000.
 - Do not try to move the pan until it has cooled completely.
- Never try to move a pan that has caught on fire. This may result in spillage, injury and the spreading of fire.
- If a fire occurs in the oven, turn the oven off and leave the door closed to smother the fire. Call the fire service on 000.
- Maintain all appliances, including removing all grease and oil from cooking surfaces to reduce the chance of a fire starting.
- Wear clothes with short or tight-fitting sleeves. Loose garments can easily catch fire.
- Do not put combustible materials such as tea towels and oven mitts on or near the cook top.

Always call the fire service on 000 (Triple Zero) even if you have put the fire out. The fire could have spread to your range hood or into your ceiling through your exhaust fan. There is no cost for Fire Service attendance when you call 000. Find more MFS cooking fire safety tips [here](#).

For media enquiries and interviews call 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*’. Cooking fire hashtags include:

[#KeepLookingWhenCooking](#) [#StandByYourPan](#) [#NoFacebookingWhenCooking](#) [#HomeFireSafetyWeek](#)

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