

# media release

SA Metropolitan Fire Service



## Avoid a Christmas cooking disaster!

Wednesday, 24 December 2014

The festive combination of drinking, socialising, napping and cooking has prompted the Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) to issue a cooking fire warning this Christmas.

Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) Commander of Community Safety and Resilience, Greg Howard said a Christmas Day cooking disaster can be avoided by following some simple tips.

“Presents aside, what Australians love most is sitting down together for their Christmas meal. Unfortunately with distractions such as guests, long discussions, phone-calls, children, alcohol, present-opening and naps, there is potential for cooking to be left unattended and a fire to start.”

“Prevent fires by giving greasy ovens and barbeques a good clean to ensure fat doesn’t catch alight. And set a timer to ensure you don’t forget the cooking while celebrating with relatives and friends,” MFS Commander Howard said.

Over the last three years, Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) and Country Fire Service (CFS) firefighters have responded to more than 1000 cooking fires across South Australia.

The MFS recommends that people have and learn how to use a fire blanket and dry chemical powder fire extinguisher so that small fires can be quickly extinguished. Fire blankets and dry chemical fire extinguishers can also make great, last minute practical Christmas gifts.

Year	Cooking fires
2012 (Calendar Year)	381 cooking fire incidents*
2013 (Calendar Year)	351 cooking fire incidents*
2014 (Calendar Year - to date)	357 cooking fire incidents*
<b>TOTAL - 2012, 2013 &amp; 2014</b>	<b>1089 cooking fires*</b>

*\*Cooking fires responded to by MFS and CFS firefighters across SA.*

In recent years, four South Australians have died and another 10 have been seriously injured due to cooking fires.

MFS Commander, Greg Howard said, “Cooking fires are one of the most common house fire causes throughout the year. We’re urging everyone to have a safe Christmas and Boxing Day - we don’t want our firefighters to be called to your home!”

People can enjoy a safe Christmas by following these tips:

- **Never leave cooking unattended.** Use a timer to remind you to check the oven or BBQ.
- **Use extra caution when cooking with oils.** Heat cooking oils slowly.
- **Never throw water onto an oil or fat fire.** Use a fire blanket, saucepan lid or a Dry Chemical Powder fire extinguisher.
- **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 oven door closed** to smother the fire. If the fire does not go out, evacuate your home before calling triple zero for help.
- **Even if you think you have extinguished the fire completely, don’t hesitate to call the fire service via 000 to check roof spaces.** There is no charge for this response.

The MFS recommends combining the above safety tips with interconnected, photo-electric smoke alarms that are less than 10 years old and a Home Fire Escape Plan.

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

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