

media release

SA Metropolitan Fire Service



Lives threatened by cooking fires

Friday, 21 August 2009

The Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) has responded to two different cooking fires in the same day which left one person with serious burns and another feeling lucky to be alive.

At 9.30 this morning MFS firefighters were called to a house fire on Newcastle Street at Rosewater.

The only person home at the time was sick in bed and was completely unaware that oil had been left cooking on the stove.

The ill man responded to the sound of the smoke alarm by calling '000'. He also managed to put the fire out by the time MFS firefighters arrived.

MFS Community Safety District Officer, Allan Foster says, "The fire could have destroyed the home and potentially claimed a life if there hadn't been a **working smoke alarm** at the property."

Firefighters used a thermal imaging camera to ensure the fire hadn't spread through the range hood and flue into the roof. Damage was limited to the stove, range hood and flue and is estimated at \$4,000.

"This fire is a reminder to all about the importance of a working smoke alarm. The smoke alarm saved the home and potentially, a life."

In a separate but similar incident, MFS firefighters responded to another cooking fire at a unit on Fullarton Road at Dulwich at 12.30 this morning.

A man living at the home had mistakenly left oil cooking on the stove and later noticed the fire.

Unfortunately the man suffered oil burns to his arm and shoulder while trying to extinguish the blaze and was taken to hospital for treatment.

"Both fires highlight the importance of following some simple yet important steps while cooking. Following these steps can avoid property damage or injury and could save your life," Mr Foster says.

Cooking safety tips:

- **Never leave cooking unattended.** High heat cooking requires constant monitoring. Low heat cooking must be monitored at regular intervals.
- **Use extra caution when cooking with oils.** Heat cooking oils slowly and never leave unattended.
- **Never** throw water onto an oil or fat fire. Use a fire blanket, a saucepan lid or a Dry Chemical Powder fire extinguisher to smother the fire. Familiarise yourself with 'How to use' instructions displayed on the extinguisher and fire blanket packaging NOW, not when fire breaks out.
- **Never** try to move a pan that has caught on fire. This is likely to 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 via '000'.

For further home fire safety information or cooking safety information, visit the MFS website at:

http://www.mfs.sa.gov.au/site/community_safety/home_fire_safety_information_sheets_domestic.jsp

Or, phone the MFS Community Safety Department (details below).

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