

media release



Better to be safe than sorry!

Monday, 23 February 2009

The Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS), Country Fire Service (CFS) and the State Government have launched a state-wide campaign urging people to send their smoke alarms into retirement when they reach 10 years of age.

Regardless of whether smoke alarms are battery operated or connected to the mains power supply, smoke alarms only last for 10 years under normal operating conditions.

MFS Chief Officer, Grant Lupton, said, "Years ago in a house fire you would have well over 10 minutes to get out. Today that time has reduced to less than 4 minutes. So every extra warning per second is vital."

Today's housing designs and our increasing preference for synthetic furnishings and building materials have reduced the amount of time available to escape from a house fire.

"Old smoke alarms take longer to respond to smoke, or may not respond at all, reducing critical escape time from a house fire. It's so easy to lose track of the years and not realise that your smoke alarm is too old to be relying on," said Mr Lupton.

Research undertaken by the MFS indicates that only one third of the population knows that smoke alarms have a limited life.

Emergency Service Minister, Michael Wright, said it was crucial for people to make the effort to check their alarms, which could have life-saving consequences.

"We're asking all South Australians to take the time and do the right thing by themselves and their families, as making sure that your smoke alarm is in good working order could just save your life and home in a fire emergency."

CFS Chief Officer, Euan Ferguson said, "The fire services are asking people to check when they installed their smoke alarms. If they have passed their 10 year 'use by' date, replace them immediately."

Smoke alarm technology has improved since legislation was introduced in 1995 and South Australia's fire services are encouraging the public to improve their home fire safety when they replace old smoke alarms.

The fire services recommend that you replace old smoke alarms with interconnected, photoelectric smoke alarms which are powered by 240v and should be placed in all bedrooms and passage ways leading to bedrooms and living areas.

Retire your smoke alarms when they reach 10 years of age. It's better to be safe than sorry! Contact your local electrician to arrange to have your smoke alarms replaced and upgraded.

For further information visit the MFS and CFS websites at www.mfs.sa.gov.au and www.cfs.sa.gov.au or call 1300 737 637.

For further information contact the MFS Media Line (08) 8204 3770 or CFS Media Line (08) 8463 4206.