

media release

SA Metropolitan Fire Service



Maintain your air-cons now before summer

Wednesday, 27 November 2013

With summer and searing heat on the way, the Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) is urging the public to have their air cooling equipment serviced **now** to prevent costly fires.

Over the last three years, Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) and Country Fire Service (CFS) firefighters have responded to dozens of air conditioner and evaporative cooler fires that have left a **collective property damage bill of more than \$1.59 million**.

YEARS	AIR CONDITIONER / EVAPORATIVE COOLER FIRES
2010-11 <i>Financial year</i>	\$820,000 property damage*
2011-12 <i>Financial year</i>	\$320,000 property damage*
2012-13 <i>Financial year</i>	\$450,000 damage*
TOTAL DAMAGE BILL	\$1.59 million+ property damage* in three years

**Air conditioner and evaporative cooler fires investigated by MFS Fire Cause Investigators*

MFS Commander of Community Safety and Resilience, Greg Howard said the majority of the fires were caused by faulty or poorly maintained equipment.

“While \$1.59 million worth of property has been damaged or lost through air cooling equipment fires in South Australia over the last three years, in reality, the quick work of firefighters has saved many more millions of dollars in property threatened by these fires.

“The MFS is urging the public to have their air cooling equipment, including air conditioners and evaporative coolers serviced **now** by a qualified tradesperson – before long spells of hot weather set in. Not only can it prevent a fire that claims your home or business, it may also save lives as well,” MFS Commander, Greg Howard said.

MFS Commander, Greg Howard said heat wave events can place strain on air cooling equipment if it is used continuously over several days.

“**Importantly**, the MFS **does not discourage** the use of electrical air cooling equipment as it can be a necessary health requirement for the elderly or families with young children. Watch for signs of your electrical cooling equipment overheating and have a spare, well maintained fan ready that can keep you cool while resting overheated cooling equipment,” MFS Commander Howard said.

The MFS advises that you can reduce the potential for fire in the following ways:

- Arrange to have your equipment serviced by a qualified tradesperson before summer starts so that it is fully functional when hot weather begins.
- Ask the tradesperson to check for faults, remove any build-up of dust or combustible material and ensure the equipment is in good working order.
- Clean the return air filter on ducted air conditioners and split systems between services.
- Do not leave your air cooling equipment running unattended *while not at home*.
- Watch for signs of your electrical cooling equipment overheating. Keep a spare, well maintained fan that can keep you cool while resting overheated cooling equipment.
- Electrical cooling equipment such as air conditioners and evaporative coolers should be installed and serviced by a qualified tradesperson in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions.

The MFS urges householders to combine 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

Further information for the public:

Call the MFS Community Education Department on (08) 8204 3611 during business hours.
Country callers 1300 737 637.

www.mfs.sa.gov.au