

# media release



## Fireworks safety advice for the New Year

Wednesday 30 December 2009

The Country Fire Service (CFS) and Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) are together urging South Australians to exercise vigilance when in the vicinity of fireworks this New Year's Eve.

With Total Fire Bans in force across much of the State ahead of hot and dry conditions, the State's fire fighting agencies are reminding residents of the dangers associated with pyrotechnics.

CFS State Coordinator Brenton Eden says on Christmas Day, a 24 year old was arrested at Second Valley for recklessly causing a bushfire.

"The man allegedly used sparklers, resulting in a fire to approximately one-third of a hectare of dry scrub and grass. Seven Country Fire Service units attended and extinguished the fire.

"The misuse of fireworks in backyards, at parties or local parks and the beach increases the risk of fires. As the New Year approaches, the use of fireworks is irresponsible and dangerous."

South Australians are reminded that, unless they are a licenced pyrotechnician, it is an offence at any time of the year to use, buy or import, or to have fireworks in their possession or custody.

During the Fire Danger Season and on days of Total Fire bans, sparklers must not be used in the open air without a permit issued under the Fire and Emergency Services Act.

The emergency services will be on high alert due to forecast fire danger weather, but Mr Eden says those enjoying New Year's Eve gatherings should be mindful of ensuring their celebrations are safe.

"We do not want your New Year celebrations turning to tragedy because of one irresponsible act," he said.

As the misuse of fireworks results in serious fires and injuries every year, MFS Chief Officer Grant Lupton says vigilance is essential.

"Persons illegally using fireworks expose themselves and others to serious injury and even death, and can result in significant penalties and civil damages claims," he said.

"At New Year and any other time of the year, leave fireworks to the pyrotechnic experts, as the risk of fire and injury is high."

Chief Officer Lupton has also reminded residents that the 'sky lantern' – a paper lantern that is set alight to make it float through the air – is banned from use within South Australia, because it poses a high fire risk if it were to land on dry grass or become trapped under the eaves of a building.



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The lantern is made from rice paper with a flammable heat source at the base, that enables it to fly like a miniature hot air balloon. As the fire begins to die down, the lantern lowers to the ground, but the fire can still be burning when it lands.

“We’re talking about an item which is essentially a floating fire,” Mr Lupton said.

“Once the lantern has been lit and is floating, it is beyond the user’s control. If it lands on dry grass or some other flammable surface, then this could start a property fire or even a bush fire.

“Ensure this New Year is a safe and happy one, and celebrate without making risky choices that could result in fire and injury.”

For media enquiries telephone the  
MFS Media Line (08) 8204 3770 or the CFS Media Line on (08) 8212 9849.

**Further information:**

Contact the Bushfire Information Hotline **1300 362 361**  
Or visit [www.cfs.sa.gov.au](http://www.cfs.sa.gov.au) and [www.mfs.sa.gov.au](http://www.mfs.sa.gov.au)



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