

# media release

SA Metropolitan Fire Service



## Heat wave increases house fire danger

Friday, 30 January 2009

The extended period of extreme heat across South Australia has prompted a warning from the Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) about house fire danger.

“The MFS recommends that all householders monitor their cooling equipment and switch it off if it shows signs of overheating,” says MFS Commander of Infrastructure and Logistics, David Schmerl.

“And never leave fans or air conditioners running when you leave the house, as this can be highly dangerous,” he says.

The MFS warns that people also need to take care when they use fans or evaporative air conditioners near open windows.

People are advised to keep curtains and blinds well clear of the rear of the equipment so that they don't get drawn against the air intake or tangled in the fan blades, creating a risk of overheating or fire.

Commander Schmerl warns, “Be especially careful at night as this is when we are most vulnerable to fire.”

Overloading power-points with cooling equipment is another common fire cause in hot weather.

“If people wish to run more than one piece of equipment from a power point, it is best to use a power board with a safety cut-out switch to ensure that the power point isn't overloaded,” Commander Schmerl says.

The MFS advises people to use torches rather than candles during night-time power cuts, as they are cooler and don't pose a fire risk.

“If you have to use candles use wide based candle holders, don't place them in windows near curtains or other flammable objects, put them up high away from children and pets and never leave them unattended,” Commander Schmerl says.

The MFS is also reminding people about the importance of every home having a working smoke alarm as well as a tested Home Fire Escape Plan to ensure that everyone can escape from a house quickly and safely, even at night.

**For more information about home fire safety, visit the MFS website: [www.mfs.sa.gov.au](http://www.mfs.sa.gov.au)**