

media release



SOUTH AUSTRALIA POLICE
KEEPING SA SAFE

Heatwave warning to all SA residents

Tuesday, 27 January 2009

The Country Fire Service (CFS), Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) and SA Police (SAPOL) are asking all South Australians to be vigilant and 'Bushfire Ready' as the state braces itself for a heatwave.

The Bureau of Meteorology has forecast maximum temperatures of 41^oC over the next three days, with the mercury expected to remain above 35^oC until Monday.

The CFS Assistant Chief Officer Rob Sanford said everyone's assistance, especially those who live in high fire risk areas, will be essential over the next few days to keep their communities safe and prevent bushfires.

"People who live in rural areas must think ahead before using equipment such as angle grinders, welders and oxy-cutting equipment," Mr Sandford said.

"This equipment cannot be used in fire ban districts when Total Fire Bans have been declared unless a permit has been issued by a local council."

Cars, motorbikes and other exhaust emitting machinery such as chainsaws also pose a significant fire risk in bushfire prone areas.

The CFS is also asking motorists to stay clear of roads in any area near a fire to provide a clear passage for fire trucks and emergency vehicles.

"Too often we're confronted by sightseers who want to have a close look at a fire and they leave their cars on the side of the road, obstructing CFS trucks on their way to a fire," Mr Sandford said.

"People who do this must realise that they're not only putting their safety at risk but potentially the lives of the communities which the CFS fire fighters are aiming to protect."

SAPOL will also be on the look out for any suspicious activities particularly in high fire risk areas as part of Operation Nomad with over 40 'Nomad Patrols' out today.

Chief Superintendent Silvio Amoroso said SAPOL has increased its number of patrols to actively pursue and prosecute anyone not complying with the declared Fire Bans and regulations.

"Police have also identified several persons of interest and these people are being closely monitored during the fire danger season," he said.

"Offenders should expect zero tolerance from us if they choose to deliberately or negligently start bushfires," Silvio said. "Out of the 199 fires in the past fortnight, 18 have been deliberately lit, 13 due to negligent acts".

MFS Chief Officer Grant Lupton said: "The MFS covers large areas of vegetation within or surrounding Adelaide and several regional cities such as Port Lincoln.

"I'm urging people who live in what might seem to be a city or suburban area not to be complacent about the risk of fires."

The SA Farmers' Federation (SAFF) president Peter White is also encouraging grain farmers to implement the voluntary Harvesting Code of Practice during the next few days of the heatwave.

The Code of Practice requires harvesting to be suspended when the Grassland Fire Danger Index (GFDI) exceeds 35.

"I strongly urge all grain farmers to contact their local farmers' federation representative or to visit the CFS website for more information," he said.

More information is available from the CFS website at www.cfs.sa.gov.au or by contacting the CFS Bushfire Information Hotline on 1300 362 361.