

# media release

SA Metropolitan Fire Service



## Gas flue fire a strong safety message

Tuesday, 16 June 2009

A Wynn Vale family was lucky to escape a house fire overnight that was caused by a lounge suite being left too close to a gas heater flue (vent) in a carport.

The Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) says the blaze left the family of three in hospital with injuries and a \$250 000 damage bill.

MFS Community Safety District Officer, Allan Foster says the fire sends a strong message to all South Australians to take heed of **winter** home fire safety messages.

“In the colder months the MFS tends to see an increase of house fires, property loss, injuries and deaths. That’s why the public needs to be vigilant with home heating.

“It’s the second heating fire the MFS has seen within a week, and the third within a month.

“In this case, a lounge suite stored in a carport was situated too close to a gas heater flue (vent). Radiant heat ignited the lounge and caused the fire to spread quickly to the roof of the Tyrone Court home,” Mr Foster says.

The family noticed flames coming from the carport and smoke alarms sounded at about 9.45 pm last night.

A man who lived at the home initially tried to put the fire out with a garden hose, but suffered burns to his hands. His wife and their son were also treated in hospital for smoke inhalation.

Eighteen MFS firefighters spent close to an hour fighting the blaze.

“This incident is a prime example of the importance of Home Fire Escape Plans,” Mr Foster says.

The MFS urges all South Australians to have a **Home Fire Escape Plan** in the event of a house fire. Everyone should know how to get out of the house and where to meet. Your Home Fire Escape Plan should be practised regularly with your family.

Mr Foster says commonsense plays a big role in keeping your home fire safe in winter. Tips include:

- Heating equipment must be installed and maintained by a qualified tradesperson, in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions.
- Choose portable electric heaters with automatic safety switches that turn the heater off if it’s tipped over.
- Do not use portable electric heaters in wet areas to avoid the possibility of electric shock.
- Keep heaters well clear from any items that might burn. Clearance from clothes, bedding, furniture, curtains, and other combustibles should be **two metres**. Two giant, adult steps is a good rule of thumb.
- Children and pets must be supervised when heaters are in use.
- Always use a fire screen in front of open fires.
- Flues and chimneys should be cleaned once a year to prevent a build up of flammable material and ensure the fire burns properly.
- Ensure only approved fuel is used in liquid-fuelled heaters.

**For more information on home fire safety, please visit the MFS website at:**

[http://www.mfs.sa.gov.au/site/community\\_safety/home\\_fire\\_safety\\_information\\_sheets\\_domestic.jsp](http://www.mfs.sa.gov.au/site/community_safety/home_fire_safety_information_sheets_domestic.jsp)

**For interviews or media enquiries please telephone the MFS Media Line on (08) 8204 3770**

Members of the public should call the MFS Community Education Department on (08) 8204 3611 during business hours for further information. Country callers 1300 737 637.

[www.mfs.sa.gov.au](http://www.mfs.sa.gov.au)