



# Media Release

## Don't let your cooking cancel Christmas

22 December 2022

Cooking fires are the leading cause of preventable house fires in South Australia, resulting in over 700 emergency phone calls in three years.

The South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) and South Australian Country Fire Service (CFS) are urging the community to follow safe cooking practices to avoid firefighters visiting them this festive season.

MFS Community Engagement Officer, Phil Evans said the states fire services respond to more than 200 blazes each year, with distractions and unattended cooking being a major cause.

"Presents aside, what Australians love most about Christmas is getting together with friends and family and having a Christmas meal. Unfortunately, with distractions such as guests, long discussions, phone-calls, children, alcohol, present-opening and naps, there is the potential for cooking to be left unattended and a fire to start," MFS Community Engagement Officer, Phil Evans said.

Nobody wants to be a Grinch at Christmas, but with the festive combination of drinking, socialising and cooking it's important that the person in charge of lunch/dinner remains vigilant to avoid a cooking disaster.

"Before Christmas Day, give ovens and barbeques a good clean to ensure fat doesn't catch alight. When celebrating with relatives and friends set a timer to ensure you don't forget about the cooking. And if using the stove, especially if it's an open flame, do not leave it unattended," MFS Community Engagement Officer Phil Evans said.

The state's fire services are urging the community to plan for their Christmas Day feasts and think about what they will do if a Total Fire Ban is declared in the district that they live in.

CFS Director Community Risk and Resilience, Alison May, said it's important for people to understand what a Total Fire Ban means so that they know what they can and can't do.

"Solid fuel BBQs using wood or charcoal (such as Webers and pizza ovens) cannot be used on Total Fire Ban Days without a Schedule 10 permit obtained from your local council.

"Gas barbeques are fine providing they are within 15 metres of your home and are clear of flammable vegetation. The only thing worth cooking this Christmas is your meal!" said CFS Director Community Risk and Resilience, Alison May.

Total Fire Bans are announced before 5pm the previous day via the CFS website, Alert SA app and social media. However, waiting until Christmas Eve to see if a Total Fire Ban is issued for your area will be too late to get a permit.

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

**For Total Fire Ban information contact the CFS Media line on (08) 8115 3531**