



# Media Release

## Home Fire Safety Week launches with **\$28m** electrical fire warning

**HOME FIRE SAFETY WEEK LAUNCH: Friday, 2 June 2023**

Electrical fires are a costly and deadly winter house fire risk, is the sobering warning from South Australia's fire services as **Home Fire Safety Week 2023** launches today.

Over the past three years, Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) and SA Country Fire Service firefighters have battled **520 house fires** linked to electrical issues that left a **\$27.9m** trail of destruction.

Statistics show that accidental house fire deaths can be nearly four times more likely in winter, with close to 11 % of all preventable house fire deaths in Australia linked to electrical issues.

The Metropolitan Fire Service's (MFS) Chief Officer, Michael Morgan said the statistics are a wake up call to all South Australians, to get their home fire safety in order **NOW** as winter begins.

"With an average of more than one Australian dying in a preventable house fire each week in Australia, we're urging South Australians to ensure they have working smoke alarms, and that they don't take any electrical risks in the home.

"Typical electrical fires our firefighters battle are caused by overloaded power boards, multiple power boards plugged into each other, frayed electrical cords and people continuing to use faulty electrical appliances and equipment. This has to STOP," MFS Chief Officer Morgan said.

Interstate, NSW recorded their deadliest winter on record in 2022 with 16 preventable house fire fatalities. South Australian fire authorities do not want to see a similar trend emerging here.

Home Fire Safety Week involves firefighters empowering the community with home fire safety education to prevent electrical fires and their associated property loss, injuries and fatalities.

Country Fire Service (CFS) Manager of Development Assessment Services, Leah Bertholini said that winter can be a deadly time for house fires, urging all South Australians to get their home fire safety in order as winter begins.

"Once a fire starts in a modern home, you only have around four minutes for the fire to spread and engulf a room," she said.

"CFS volunteers have attended a number of structure fires this year where working smoke alarms have ensured the homes occupants were able to leave the house without injury. We are asking the community to be proactive and make sure that your smoke alarms are in working order and not to gamble with your safety when it comes to electrical hazards," Ms Bertholini said.

The top three home fire safety messages from the MFS and CFS as winter begins are:

- ALWAYS have working, interconnected [smoke alarms](#) in your home
- NEVER overload power boards and NEVER plug multiple power boards into each other
- Immediately discard and discontinue using frayed electrical cords and faulty electrical equipment.

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

**STATISTICS SOURCED FROM:**

Coates, L, Kaandorp, G, Harris, J, van Leeuwen, J, Avci, A, Evans, J, George, S, Gissing, A, van den Honert, R & Haynes, K 2019, *Preventable Residential Fire Fatalities in Australia July 2003 to June 2017*, Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC.

Pooley, Dr K, Lam, Dr R & Duong, P 2023, *FRNSW Adverse Structure Fire Outcomes 2016-2021 Report*, Fire and Rescue NSW.