



# Media Release

## SA Metropolitan Fire Service

# Cooking left unattended costs householders millions each year

Thursday 12 August 2021

Statistics show that two out of five cooking fires in South Australia started because occupants left the stove unattended, the Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) warns.

Each year, the MFS and SA Country Fire Service (CFS) respond to more than 250 cooking-related house fires.

Unsafe cooking practices are one of the most common causes of preventable residential fires in South Australia, costing householders over \$2 million a year.

MFS Community Engagement Officer, Douglas MacDonald-Taylor said cooking is a task that requires full attention, and any distraction may lead to a fire that potentially threatens lives and destroys property.

“In South Australia, about 40% of cooking-related house fires are caused by cooking left unattended. Never leave cooking unattended, even for a short amount of time. If you have to leave the kitchen, turn off the stove.”

“MFS and CFS firefighters regularly attend close calls where a resident has left cooking on the stove and fallen asleep. This is a dangerous scenario that - without working smoke alarms – can quickly turn fatal,” MFS Community Engagement Officer MacDonald-Taylor said.

In some instances, neighbours have called 000 (Triple Zero) to report hearing a neighbour’s smoke alarms activating, helping firefighters to save lives and property. The MFS also warns the community to never use water to put out a fat or oil fire. “Water can cause burning oil or grease to splatter and create a much larger fire, putting you and your family in more danger” MacDonald-Taylor said.

“Having a fire blanket and a dry chemical powder fire extinguisher near your kitchen away from the stove is your best protection for a grease fire. But that’s not enough – familiarise yourself with the instructions so if the time comes, you will know how to use them correctly and safely.”

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

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



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Regularly cleaning grease from cooking surfaces and range hoods prevents fires from becoming larger. Never use a stovetop to store items as many accidental fires have occurred by this practice.

More MFS cooking safety tips:

- Use a fire blanket or a Dry Chemical Powder fire extinguisher with a minimum rating of 5B:E to smother the flames. Note: If you do not have a fire blanket or an extinguisher protect your hands and use a saucepan lid or a solid bread board to smother the fire. Keep the utensil lid on the benchtop for this purpose.
- Never try to move a pan that has caught on fire. This may result in spillage, injury and the spreading of fire.
- Wear clothes with short or tight-fitting sleeves. Loose garments can easily catch fire.
- If a fire occurs in the oven, turn the oven off and leave the door closed to smother the fire.
- Always call the fire service even if you have put the fire out. The fire could have spread to your range hood or into your ceiling through your exhaust fan. There is no cost for fire service attendance.

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