

media release

SA Metropolitan Fire Service



Prevent electrical fire hazards at home

HOME FIRE SAFETY WEEK - Thursday, 4 June 2020

Faulty or misused electrical equipment are hidden fire hazards around the house that could cause property damage and potentially injury.

Every year, the SA Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) and Country Fire Service (CFS) attend about 200 residential fires statewide caused by faulty electronics, equipment misuse and overloaded power circuits.

Year	Fires related to electronics
2018	192
2019	226
2020 (to 31 May)	92

A Seaford Meadows family's home suffered \$5000 damage from a fire sparked by a laptop left charging on a bed in February 2017. Bedding and a mattress were destroyed but fortunately there were no injuries. **The family is available for media interviews and previously unseen incident photos are available.**

MFS Commander of Community Engagement Section Phil Crossley reminds the public to avoid charging or using mobile phones, laptops, tablets in beds or soft furniture.

"Always charge electronic devices on stable, non-combustible surfaces with adequate ventilation to allow heat to dissipate," MFS Commander Crossley said.

"Regularly check wiring or cords on your electrical appliances or accessories for any signs of damage or scorch marks, and it's a good habit to turn off electronics when not in use."

MFS Commander Crossley said mobile phones, laptops and heating appliances are everyday items but pose a fire risk if not used correctly.

"The community is spending more time at home and it is important to remember to use electronic devices and appliances that are compliant with Australian Standards," MFS Commander Crossley said.

"There may be counterfeit products being sold online that are made to look like genuine accessories, such as phone chargers. These products may overheat or cause your device to overheat and potentially start a fire."

More MFS electrical home fire safety tips:

- Always follow the manufacturer's instructions for the safe and appropriate installation, maintenance and subsequent use of any electrical item.
- Ensure all new household electrical items are compliant with the relevant Australian Standards. Most household electrical items are 'proclaimed' under the Energy Products Act 2000 in South Australia and require mandatory Australian safety approval (i.e. certification) and approval mark prior to sale.
- Always use power boards that have overload cut out switches. Do not have multiple power boards plugged into each other or into a single power point.
- Never use water to extinguish an electrical fire. Use a dry powder extinguisher with an 'ABE' or 'BE' rating or a carbon dioxide fire extinguisher.
- Always purchase electrical items from trusted Australian suppliers e.g. well known and established retailers. Purchasing electrical items online or from overseas is not recommended, and increases the risk of receiving non-compliant or unsafe products.

For media enquiries and interviews call the MFS Media Line on (08) 8204 3770

www.mfs.sa.gov.au