



Ambulance Service of New South Wales

media release

4 June 2007

Prevent Winter Burns

Ambulance warns of the increased dangers of burn injuries during the winter months.

With winter well and truly on the way, heaters and wood fires are being stoked up in family homes across the state. Ambulance is urging the public to be safety conscious this winter.

Common causes of burns include:

- Touching hot heaters. Children are particularly at risk.
- Loose clothing catching alight when brushed against a heater or flame.
- House fires caused by unattended heaters and fires.
- Scalds from spilt hot drinks or hot food (e.g., soups and noodles taken straight out of the microwave).

Ambulance officers offer the following **safety tips** to stay safe this winter.

- Ensure your home has, and maintains, a working smoke alarm. (Since 1 May 2006, it is compulsory that any residential building has, and maintains, a working smoke alarm. Batteries should be changed every 6 months or as prescribed by the manufacturers).
- Install fire guards on all open fires, and completely extinguish flames before going to bed or leaving the house.
- Ensure all heaters and electric blankets meet Australian Safety Standards, and have them serviced by an accredited agency before the cold weather starts.
- Never leave fires or heaters unattended, especially when children are around.
- Avoid leaving electric blankets on while sleeping. Check cords before use and DO NOT use the blanket if cords, or the blanket itself, is frayed or damaged.
- Have fire extinguishers and fire blankets easily accessible in the house, and know how to use them.



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- Dress children in garments that are specifically marked “low fire danger”. Avoid loose fitting clothing.
- Teach children fire safety from an early age, including an evacuation plan. Practise these principles with your children regularly.
- Keep hot liquids out of reach of children, and ensure that kettle cords and saucepan handles are kept tucked in, out of reach.
- Ensure that appliances are switched off after use.

Should you become a victim, **early first aid** reduces the severity of burns.

- **Call Triple Zero immediately and ask for Ambulance.**
- Extinguish flames. If clothes are alight, roll on the ground to smother the flames.
- Cool burns with plenty of running water.
- Remove rings and jewellery from the burn area before swelling starts.
- DO NOT apply creams or lotions.

~ ENDS ~

For further information or local media opportunities please contact Ambulance Media on (02) 9320-7796.