



**MEDIA RELEASE – 2009**

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## **DON'T LET AN OLD HEATER BURN YOUR HOUSE DOWN**

The MFB, CFA and Energy Safe Victoria (ESV) are encouraging Victorians to check their hotspots and use heating appliances safely to avoid house fires this winter.

CFA Community Safety Manager, John Boal said it is crucial to remain aware of the risks heaters and fires can pose.

"It is important to remain vigilant when using heaters or any type of heating appliance. Most house fires occur in winter, with around 25 per cent caused by heating or cooking" he said.

It is also crucial to check appliances before reusing them for another winter. Many house fires in past years have been caused by the use of faulty equipment.

"Many people tend to leave appliances such as heaters unchecked, therefore resulting in fires that could have been easily prevented. We are urging people to have their heaters and appliances professionally checked before using them again this winter" said **CFA Community Development Officer, Robyn Hobbs.**

The MFB, CFA and ESV recommend the following tips to heat your home safely this winter:

- service heating units and ducted heating systems
- keep clothes, linen, and other combustibles at least one metre away from all heaters
- never leave heaters on, or open fires burning, when you leave the house or go to bed
- do not let children stand or sleep too close to heaters or open fires
- do not let electrical cords cross the front of electric heaters
- switch off your electric blanket before you go to sleep
- do not run cords under carpets or rugs
- always install guards around open fires
- ensure your home has a working smoke alarm
- have a fire escape plan in place

More information on winter fire safety can be found at the campaign's official website, [www.homefiresafety.com.au](http://www.homefiresafety.com.au)

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**Photo opportunities please contact:**

**Your local Fire Brigade.**