



MEDIA RELEASE – 2009

HOARDING IS A FIRE HAZARD

Victoria's fire services are concerned that hoarders are unwittingly putting their lives and property at increased risk during home fires.

Community Safety Manager, John Boal said most of the hoarders were aged over 50 and generally hoarded material such as newspapers and clothing.

Hoarding is a major risk to occupants and fire services. "Piles and boxes of papers and clothing are potential sources of ignition and it also makes it very difficult for occupants to escape the fire" Mr Boal said.

"An average house fire requires about seven firefighters, whilst a fire in a hoarding household requires more than 15 firefighters" he said. The fire damage bill is also considerably higher in a hoarding household.

It is important for families to consider the increased fire risk of hoarding and to make sure there are clear paths to escape quickly in case of fire.

Mr Boal said house fires could be avoided by following this simple checklist:

- Never leave cooking unattended
- Turning off heating when not at home
- Putting electric blankets on timers, or turning them off when you get into bed
- Always using a fire guard around fires
- Keep clothing and other combustible materials more than one metre away from heaters and fireplaces.

More information on winter fire safety can be found at the campaign's official website, www.homefiresafety.com.au or by phoning 1800 240 667.

For more information please contact:

Robyn Hobbs (CFA)

0417 056 264

r.hobbs@cfa.vic.gov.au

Photo opportunities please contact:

Your local Fire Brigade.