



JOINT MEDIA RELEASE – 11 August 2010

CANDLE FIRE HIGHLIGHTS NEED FOR CARE AROUND THE HOME

CFA and MFB are reminding people to be careful with candles after a house in Boronia was extensively damaged by fire this week.

A candle burning in a bedroom is believed to have sparked the blaze just before 8.30pm on Tuesday.

The three occupants got out of the house safely but CFA State Duty Officer Craig Brownlie said the fire could have had a tragic outcome.

“People need to take care whenever they use candles in the home,” he said. “Flammable materials need to be kept well clear of the flame and burning candles should never be left unattended. They should always be extinguished before you go to bed or leave the room.”

“This family is very lucky that the fire was discovered soon after it started and they were able to get out of the house without injury.”

Mr Brownlie said it has been a busy winter for Victoria’s fire services with more than 630 house fires across the state during June and July.

“Each winter we see an increase in the number of house fires with many caused by candles, heaters, electric blankets and cooking,” he said. “So far this winter, more than 216 house fires have started in the kitchen but these fires are easy to avoid.”

“People should never leave cooking unattended, keep stoves and grills free of grease and fat build up and keep flammable materials such as tea towels away from cooking appliances.”

MFB Commander Frank Stockton said people should be especially careful when cooking with oil or fat.

“Fat or cooking oil can reach a temperature where it ignites; so it is important that you are always watching it. Never leave cooking unattended, even for a moment,” he said. “These fires also highlight the danger of throwing water on flaming oil, which can actually spread the flames. In these situations, flames should be smothered with a fire blanket or with the lid of the pot.”

Commander Stockton also stressed the importance of having a working smoke alarm in every home.

“If a fire does start in your home, having a working smoke alarm and a well practised home fire escape plan is one of the best ways to ensure you and your family remain safe.”

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