



Michael Gallacher MLC

Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council
Minister for Police and Emergency Services
Minister for the Hunter

MEDIA RELEASE

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MINISTER LAUNCHES NEW WINTER FIRE SAFETY CAMPAIGN

Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Michael Gallacher today urged householders not to be complacent after it was revealed that while the vast majority of NSW residents considered their homes and family fire safe, most had not practiced how to escape should a blaze start.

Minister Gallacher today joined Fire & Rescue NSW (FRNSW) Commissioner Greg Mullins and NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) Deputy Commissioner Rob Rogers to launch the annual Winter Fire Safety campaign at the CSIRO facility at Macquarie Park.

“Every day firefighters attend home fires that could have been prevented with a few simple steps and precautions. Sadly, this includes fires where people have been killed or seriously injured,” Minister Gallacher said.

Between May and September in 2012, there were 2028 house fires in NSW with 313 fire injuries and 11 preventable fire deaths.

“House fires can be devastating but what is concerning is that, according to FRNSW research, more than 85 per cent of NSW residents consider their homes safe from fire but only just over 10 per cent had a practised home escape plan.

“It can take just three minutes for a fire to take hold, but only seconds to prevent one. The problem is complacency as people assume it will never happen to them.

“Don’t leave you and your family’s fire safety to chance this winter,” Minister Gallacher said.

FRNSW Commissioner Mullins said FRNSW research consistently showed the common risk factors for house fires were behavioural, such as smoking and drinking habits and lack of attention to cooking and heating.

He said people could greatly reduce their risk of fire by identifying and changing risky behaviour and habits.

“People need to be more vigilant in their homes,” Commissioner Mullins said.

“It can be as simple as turning off heaters and keeping clothing at least 1m away; not overloading power points; and not leaving cooking or open flame materials, such as fireplaces, cigarettes and candles, unattended.

“The best way to keep your family out of harm’s way and identify potential risks is by doing a FRNSW/GIO online home fire safety audit and making sure you have working smoke alarms and a practiced home escape plan.”

NSW RFS Deputy Commissioner Rogers said complacency and inaction often contributed to house fires.

“A lot of people seem to adopt the ‘it won’t happen to me’ attitude and as a result they ignore the fire risks in their own home,” he said.

“The fact is it can happen to you. Even a small fire can have a devastating impact emotionally, financially and physically. So, both FRNSW and the NSW RFS urge you not to be complacent this winter – assess the risks in your home and take the precautions needed to prevent a fire.”

Fire authorities, in partnership with FRNSW principal partner GIO, are encouraging householders to complete an online Home Fire Safety Audit as part of the winter fire safety campaign at: www.homefiresafetyaudit.com.au

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