



Troy Grant
Minister for Police
Minister for Emergency Services

MEDIA RELEASE

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REMEMBER TO BE SAFE AS THE COLD WINTER WEATHER SETTLES IN

With temperatures as low as -4 degrees this week in some areas of the state, Minister for Police and Minister for Emergency Services Troy Grant has today joined with leaders across emergency management to call on the community to do their bit to stay safe this winter.

Last winter firefighters attended more than 1,100 house fires across the state and the NSW SES received 3,846 calls for assistance.

Mr Grant said the emergency services stand ready to help out though personnel and volunteers also need the community to be prepared for weather events and accidents that can end in tragedy be it in the home, at the mercy of Mother Nature, or on the roads.

“Winter is the worst time of the year for fires in the home and we want everyone this season to take simple steps to avoid losing their home or tragically their life,” Mr Grant said.

“Motorists should stay clear of driving in floodwaters, be mindful of black ice and take care behind the wheel when faced with heavy rain, sleet or snow.

“As the mercury continues to drop its important households take care when using heaters and electric blankets, never get complacent when preparing food in the kitchen or microwave and ensure ovens and range hoods are clean of grease.

“Every household should have a fire escape plan that is written down and practiced regularly and remember that in the case of an emergency to: *Get Out, Stay Out and Call Triple Zero (000).*”

Steps to assist the community to stay safe during the colder months include:

- **Be aware** – check the NSW Emergency Services and Live Traffic NSW websites for live updates and download the Emergency + app. The Emergency + app tells users when they should call Triple Zero (000) and who to call in non-emergency situations. It also helps dial the number and shows the phone’s GPS co-ordinates for the caller to read out to the operator;
- **Plan now** – Secure or put away loose items around your property, check your roof is in good repair, park away from trees and take the extra time to find an alternate way or delay your trip if its flooding;
- **Know your risk** – make sure everyone knows two safe ways out of every room in the house and ensure there’s an adequate number of suitable smoke alarms installed and regularly tested; and

- **Look out for each other** – Make sure to take extra care with ice and snow on the road, always have vehicle fog or head lights on when vision is difficult and braking should be gentle and early.

On average 21 people die from house fires each year in NSW. Each year Fire and Rescue NSW (FRNSW) attends approximately 4,500 residential fires in NSW with approximately 30 per cent occurring in winter months. In 2018 to date there has been approximately 1,400 house fires and five fatalities.

Approximately 45 per cent of all home fires start in the kitchen and a further eight per cent in the sleeping area. It can take as little as three minutes for a fire to take hold.

Mr Grant said that last winter, 112 people lost their lives on our roads and motorists are reminded to use caution when driving in adverse weather and importantly to drive to the conditions.

“Our Traffic and Highway Patrol officers will be out in force on all roads and during winter they will place particular focus on the Snowy Mountains,” Mr Grant said.

“Speeding, drink and drug driving, mobile-phone use and other dangerous driver behavior will be targeted. If you do the wrong thing you will get caught.”

MEDIA: Douglas Martin | 0438 371 35