



Media Release

Keep it neat and it won't overheat

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As Canberrans feel the pinch of winter, ACT Fire & Rescue (ACTF&R) is urging residents to consider what electrical fire hazards they may have in their home.

ACTF&R Superintendent Pat Jones officially launched the Winter Home Fire Safety Campaign which this year focuses on power boards.

"The message to the ACT community this year is 'Keep it neat and it won't overheat' because overloaded power boards can be a fire risk," Mr Jones said.

"Power boards are often called the hidden hazard as once connected in the home it can be forgotten about but, like any piece of equipment, it must be looked after.

"Never connect power boards and double adaptors together and provide adequate ventilation to power boards. Don't place power boards behind curtains or under furniture."

This year, firefighters have attended 91 residential structure fires of which 21% were determined to have involved electrical equipment. In 2013, ACTF&R attended 243 residential structure fires with 16% the result of electrical equipment.

"The vast majority were due to electrical equipment being overloaded and generating enough heat to start a fire," Mr Jones said.

"What's concerning is that at June, we've already seen a 5% increase on fires caused by electrical equipment from 2013.

"When purchasing a power board check if it has overload protection, as that will ensure the source of power is cut if heat becomes an issue."

A licensed electrician may also be able to install additional power points to avoid the excessive use of power boards.

"Fires cause a large amount of damage and subsequent cost to the community and investigations into the causes have determined many could have been prevented," Mr Jones said. "It is important residents not only consider potential fire hazards in their home but have a working smoke alarm in the event of any emergency."