

**Question on Notice
No. 918
Asked on 19 May 2010**

MRS SULLIVAN asked the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services (MR ROBERTS)—

QUESTION:

As the colder months approach, what advice can the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service provide to local residents about how they can reduce the risk of house fires?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for her question. Her electorate of Pumicestone falls within the Queensland Fire and Rescue (QFRS) Brisbane Region, which saw over 185 structural fires last winter.

The risk of structural fires is high during the colder months of the year when people are using more heating and drying appliances. The QFRS suggests the following easy steps which can be followed to reduce this risk:

- Install and maintain working photoelectric smoke alarms;
- Have a home fire escape plan and practise it regularly;
- Keep heaters at least one metre away from clothes, bedding, furniture, curtains and other combustible materials;
- Monitor heating appliances – do not leave them unattended and choose appliances that meet Australian Standards;
- Make sure all heating and drying appliances are in good working order and are used, installed and maintained according to the manufacturer's specifications;
- If electrical items have been stored away over summer it is a good idea to have them checked by an authorised electrician before use;
- Check electric blankets for frayed cords and damaged wiring regularly and switch them off before you get into bed;
- Clean the lint filter of your clothes dryer;
- Never overload power boards and power points and never place appliances or furniture on top of power cords;
- Keep matches and lighters out of the reach of children;
- Use a fire screen in front of a fireplace and make sure the chimney is cleaned regularly. Also check the chimney walls for signs of weakening and cracks; and
- Liquid fuel heaters should be cleaned and refuelled in a well ventilated area and only use the fuel type specified by the manufacturer.

Residents can also contact the QFRS on 1300 369 003 to arrange a free Safehome visit. As part of this service firefighters can come to your home and work through a checklist of fire and general safety issues and provide advice about any particular concerns. Further information about fire safety is also available at www.fire.qld.gov.au, or from your local fire station.