

26 May 2022

## Queenslanders warned of fire risk as temperature cools

As temperatures drop, RACQ has reminded Queenslanders to consider their home fire risks after new data revealed 60% of people did not check their heaters and electric blankets every time before using them in winter.

RACQ spokesperson Kate Leonard-Jones said RACQ had received 1,108 fire damage insurance claims over the past three years.

“House fires can happen to anyone and most are caused by everyday items like cooking equipment, faulty or poorly maintained appliances, and flammable materials placed too close to heat sources,” Ms Leonard-Jones said.

“Heaters and electric blankets which haven’t been used since last winter, can be damaged while in storage and may pose a serious safety risk.

“It’s crucial you check these for a build-up of dust, loose or damaged cords and rust before you plug them in and if you’re unsure have a qualified electrician check them out.”

Ms Leonard-Jones said half of those surveyed admitted they did not have an emergency evacuation plan and 74% did not have an emergency kit.

“Make it a priority this winter to make an escape plan with multiple exits based on the location of the fire and practice it regularly with your family,” she said.

Ms Leonard-Jones also urged Queenslanders to test their smoke alarms.

“Only working smoke alarms save lives so check yours is operating as it should. The safest option is interconnected smoke alarms because when one alarm goes off, they all do,” she said.

“This year it became law for all rental properties to have interconnected, photoelectric smoke alarms and all Queensland homes will require them by 2027, so consider upgrading yours now.

“Every moment counts in a fire so the earlier you’re warned, the better your chances are of getting out safely.”

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RACQ is Queensland’s largest club and peak independent motoring organisation. We were formed in 1905 to represent the interests of the State’s first motorists and today campaign for safer drivers, vehicles and roads on behalf of more than 1.7 million members who own the Club. We offer those members a vast range of motoring, insurance, banking, entertainment and travel services and benefits, and each year respond to more than a million calls for roadside assistance.