



Media Release

Tuesday 28 April 2015

RAC urges fire safety this winter

RAC is urging Western Australians to be fire-safe in their homes after reporting a surge in the number of claims for serious house fires this past financial year.

RAC Insurance Home Claims Manager, Glen Walker, said RAC has received double the amount of serious house fire claims between July and December 2014, compared to the same period in 2013.

"In the first six months of the 2014/15 financial year, we received 25 serious house fire claims causing at least \$100,000 worth of damage each," Mr Walker said.

"This is a significant increase on the year before. To put it in perspective, we received a total of 20 serious house fire claims for the whole of 2013/14, so to see 22 in the first six months of this financial year is quite alarming.

"Typically, we notice an increase in the number of serious house fires as winter approaches, with people more likely to use their heaters, electric blankets, candles and fireplaces.

"House fires put significant stress on the family, and often mean people are inconvenienced for weeks or months while their home is being repaired. With the increase we've seen in accidental house fire claims this year, we really want our members and the wider WA community to educate themselves on fire safety in the home.

"We often see examples of traumatic house fires which could have been avoided with the right preventive action. Recently we responded to a claim where a couple of overloaded power boards with multiple appliances plugged in caused a house fire which resulted in \$300,000 worth of damage to the family home.

"With the average cost of rebuilding after a serious house fire being close to \$350,000, and the approximate cost of replacing contents lost in a house fire being roughly \$120,000 it's worth educating yourself to avoid a serious house fire.

"Our advice is to test your smoke alarms, check your heaters and chimneys, unplug appliances when they're not in use, and invest in a fire blanket or extinguisher.

"We would also recommend making sure that you have enough insurance cover, so you aren't left out of pocket should you need to replace your contents or rebuild part or your entire home after a fire."

RAC has online insurance calculators at rac.com.au/calculators which members and the WA public can use to help check if they have enough building and contents cover.

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