

## MEDIA RELEASE

### Prepare for a fire safe summer

**October 2014:** As the drier weather increases the threat of fire to homes over summer, fire protection specialist [Wormald](#) is encouraging New Zealanders to carefully assess their property for potential fire hazards – inside and out. As people spend more time relaxing and entertaining at home, adequate fire protection equipment should be in place.

Dave Hipkins, National Technical Manager at Wormald advised, “Simple fire safety oversights can increase the risk of fire in and around the home. It is a good idea to run through a mental fire safety checklist before leaving the house or going to bed. This may include blowing out candles, switching off kitchen appliances and checking the barbecue gas cylinder is turned off.

“Summer is traditionally a busy time of year with plenty of distractions making it easy to leave a barbecue burner running, cooktops unattended or fairy lights twinkling.” He also reminds parents not to remove batteries from their smoke alarms to power up new toys and electronic devices.

“The effects of a fire can be catastrophic and I urge everyone to take extra precautions this summer to protect their families and homes from fire.”

To help reduce the risk of fire over summer, householders should identify potential fire hazards around the home and take necessary precautions. Wormald offers the following tips:

#### **Barbecues/outdoors**

- Be aware of any local fire restrictions that you should be compliant with before lighting or turning on a gas BBQ or using cultural cooking facilities.
- Check the expiry date on the BBQ gas cylinder, and ensure hose pipes and connections aren't cracked or corroded
- Keep a close eye on the barbecue whilst lit and when finished, turn off the gas cylinder and let the remaining gas in the pipe run through the BBQ before shutting it off
- If a gas leak should occur, turn the cylinder off immediately and allow any gas to dissipate. LPG is flammable, heavier than air and may remain in the air for some time
- Keep the BBQ clean and remove excess oil from the hotplates and drip trays to avoid flare ups

- Allow hot ashes or coals to cool for 48 hours before removing them
- Keep children away from the BBQ while it is lit and ensure lighters and matches are out of reach
- Do not, under any circumstances, use accelerants to assist with lighting a wood BBQ

#### **Christmas trees**

- Position Christmas trees a safe distance away from any potential fire source such as lamps, televisions or electrical sockets
- Keep Christmas trees and decorations away from lights or candle flames
- Source fairy lights from a reliable supplier, and do not overload electrical sockets with an excessive number of lights or other electrical appliances

#### **Fire protection equipment**

- Ensure smoke alarms are installed and in proper working order
- Equip your home with appropriate fire extinguishers and fire blankets and place them in accessible locations
- Develop a fire escape plan and practice it regularly with everyone in the household. A fire escape plan should start with a floor plan of the home that maps out the quickest escape route from each room and indicates where fire safety equipment is kept.

It is also important to have working smoke alarms in place. “In the event of fire, smoke alarms can alert occupants of danger and allow precious time to escape. Smoke alarms should be installed near sleeping areas and on each storey of the house. It is also important to regularly replace batteries and check that alarms are in working order by pushing the test button.”

More summer fire safety tips can be downloaded from Wormald’s resource centre at [www.wormald.co.nz/resource-centre/summer-fire-safety-checklist](http://www.wormald.co.nz/resource-centre/summer-fire-safety-checklist).

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#### **ABOUT WORMALD**

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