

Media Release



Government of South Australia

Office of Consumer and
Business Affairs

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Protecting SA Consumers from Insulation Hazards

With many consumers taking steps to make their homes more energy efficient, the Office of Consumer and Business Affairs (OCBA) has been introducing measures to increase protections for consumers.

If insulation is installed too close to electrical fittings, such as down lights or exhaust fans, then it could potentially start a fire.

The Federal Government is responsible for requirements put in place under its Nation Building Economic Stimulus plan. However, the Commissioner for Consumer Affairs, David Green, says that at the State level work has been done to ensure that consumers are afforded the best protection.

“We're the first jurisdiction in Australia to begin working on a mandatory standard for installing insulation.”

“This will set down in law the safety elements associated with installing insulation to eliminate the potential for sloppy work and make the safety standards enforceable.”

The proposed requirements were distributed to installers earlier this year for feedback as well as a timely reminder of safe practices. OCBA is working closely on incorporating newer elements from the Electrical Wiring Code into the new safety standard which is based on an older Australian guideline (non-mandatory Standard).

The Commissioner says he expects the safety standard will be able to be introduced early in New Year.

In the meantime, OCBA has alerted households to the risks of incorrectly installed insulation. OCBA issued a public warning in February 2009, urging consumers who had insulation installed prior to 2007 to arrange a safety inspection by a qualified electrician to ensure that the insulation is installed correctly and that protective covers or barriers are in place to allow heat to escape around lights and fans.

OCBA has continued to remind consumers of this important safety message through warning messages on its website and during media opportunities.

OCBA compliance officers have also been cracking down on unlicensed installers who may have potentially put lives at risk with incorrectly installed insulation. South Australia is the only Australian state where, by law, installers of ceiling insulation must be licensed. The licensing checks of 168 traders have resulted in OCBA's request for 25 traders to be removed from the Federal Government's installer register and a number of investigations launched.

Consumers who are thinking of having insulation installed can find information about licensed builders on the Licensing Public Register at www.ocba.sa.gov.au/licensing/

More information about insulation safety is available from OCBA's product safety section on 8152 0732 or at www.ocba.sa.gov.au