

Fire & Rescue NSW

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Halogen Downlights

Fact

Over the past five years there have been a significant number of fires in NSW related to halogen down-lights. Halogen down-lights create a lot of heat and if they are not correctly insulated, installed and maintained they can cause a fire. Halogen lights generate very high temperatures which can get anywhere up to 370C.

Halogen down light fire safety

- Always use a licensed electrical contractor to install the halogen down-lights and ensure the lights meet the current Australian Standards.
- Never install halogen down-lights near structural timber members such as roof, ceiling or floor beams.
- Ensure the lights and transformers are not covered by ceiling insulation such as pulped paper, rock wool, fibreglass batts or polyester batts. The heat from the lights can cause the insulation to smoulder or ignite.
- When having renovations or work done to the home, ensure the existing ceiling insulation does not come in contact with the halogen down-lights.
- Down lights and their auxiliary equipment must be installed in such a manner that necessary cooling air movement around them is not impaired by thermal insulation or other material.
- Where thermal insulation is of a type that is not fixed in position e.g. loose fill, a barrier or guard constructed of fire-resistant material shall be provided and secured in position to maintain the necessary clearance. These covers must meet AS 60598.1 and 60598.2.
- Check and maintain the lights to prevent a build up of wind blown debris, such as dust and leaves, in the roof cavity near the down-lights.
- Vermin often like to nest within roof and floor cavities. As the halogen lights and ceiling insulation provide heat for nesting, regularly check for damage caused by vermin activity that could potentially cause a fire.

Additional safety tips

- Smoke alarms will only detect smoke below the ceiling, to detect smoke in the roof space install smoke alarms in the roof area of your home.
- Consider replacing the 50W bulbs with 35W Infra-Red coated bulbs. These emit similar light to the higher rated ones.
- If bright light is not required, a 20W Infra-Red coated bulbs will often be sufficient.
- Halogen bulbs use up to six times the energy of older traditional light bulbs, turn lights off when room is not in use.
- Infra-Red coated bulbs are more costly to purchase but last up to 50 times longer and can save up to 90% on your lighting power bill.
- Covers for ceiling down lights in the roof are available from as little as \$15.