

Firefighters across Scotland to mark Earth Hour 2016 this weekend



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Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) crews across the country will join millions of people around the world in reducing energy use by switching off non-essential lights for 60 minutes on Saturday 19 March. The switch-off, which begins at 8:30pm, will not affect the service's response to incidents or other operations. Sarah O'Donnell is the SFRS director of finance and contractual services and chair of its environmental forum

She said: "We're committed to reducing our carbon footprint and we'll be joining millions of people and many other organisations in marking this year's Earth Hour. "Little changes in behaviour can make a big difference. Turning out non-essential lights is a small step but well worth doing. "While it's obviously the case that a fire and rescue service needs to use significant resources to protect communities and respond to emergencies, we're committed to operating in an environmentally sustainable manner and reducing our impact on the environment."

This is the second time that SFRS has taken part in the global event.

As people across Scotland turn off their lights to create awareness about climate change, SFRS recommends using torches or flameless candles for light, instead of candles during Earth Hour.

If you are using candles try not to expose yourself to any unnecessary risk of fire. Keep candles on hard flat surfaces and away from any flammable materials such as curtains and upholstery and never leave candles burning if you leave the room, house or go to bed.

SFRS is also encouraging householders to sign up for a free home fire safety visit.

As part of our commitment to building a safer Scotland we offer everyone in Scotland a free home fire safety visit. We can also fit smoke alarms free of charge if your home requires them.

It's so easy to arrange. To register for a FREE Home Fire Safety Visit call the SFRS freephone number: 0800 0731 999, or text "FIRE" to 80800 from your mobile phone.

A host of fire safety advice is also available on the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service website www.firescotland.gov.uk

Earth Hour was famously started as a lights-off event in Sydney, Australia in 2007. Since then it has grown to engage more than 172 countries and territories worldwide.