

FEBRUARY: Week 4 – Fire Safety for Children

Overview: One of the primary causes of residential fire deaths and injuries for children under ten is playing with a heat source, which includes lighters and matches. Between 2015 and 2019, 923 fires in which playing with a heat source was a contributing factor were reported by Tennessee fire departments. Fires resulting from playing with a heat source caused 3 civilian deaths, 24 civilian injuries, and \$9 million in property damage in that time.



Resources: The following resources are available:

- Children and fire safety tips
 - <https://www.nfpa.org/-/media/Files/Public-Education/Resources/Safety-tip-sheets/ChildrenAndFireSafetyTips.ashx?la=en>
- “Young Fire Setters” safety tip sheet
 - <http://www.nfpa.org/~media/files/public-education/resources/safety-tip-sheets/youngfiresetterstipsheet.pdf?la=en>
- “Young Fire Setters” YouTube video
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aqrlUYTKYq8>
- Playing with fire – NFPA report
 - <http://www.nfpa.org/news-and-research/fire-statistics-and-reports/fire-statistics/fire-causes/arson-and-juvenile-firesetting/children-playing-with-fire>
- “The Fire Challenge”: A conversation with parents & caretakers lesson
 - <http://www.nfpa.org/~media/files/public-education/resources/lesson-plans/lessonfirechallenge.pdf?la=en>

Media Tools: Use the following pre-written media releases and social media posts in your efforts to promote fire safety for children:

- **Twitter**
 - Stop fire setting before it happens! Store matches/lighters out of children's reach, preferably in a locked cabinet. @TNCommerceInsur
 - Stop fire setting before it happens! Never leave matches/lighters where children may be unsupervised. @TNCommerceInsur #FireSafeTN
 - Want some helpful tips to prevent child fire setting? Go here: <https://www.nfpa.org>. Child fire setting leads to over \$1 million in property damage every year in TN. Prevention tips: <https://www.nfpa.org> @TNCommerceInsur
- **Facebook**
 - Fire setting happens when children begin to experiment with fire using matches and lighters. Many fires happen when young children are left alone, even for a short period of time, with access to matches and lighters. Parents must have clear rules and consequences about fire misuse. For more tips, go here: <https://www.nfpa.org/-/media/Files/Public-Education/Resources/Safety-tip-sheets/ChildrenAndFireSafetyTips.ashx?la=en>
 - Children playing with fire cause hundreds of deaths and injuries each year. Preschoolers and kindergartners are most likely to start these fires, typically by playing with matches and

lighters, and are most likely to die in them. For more tips, go here: <https://www.nfpa.org/-/media/Files/Public-Education/Resources/Safety-tip-sheets/ChildrenAndFireSafetyTips.ashx?la=en>

- If you suspect your child is intentionally setting fires or unusually fascinated with fire, get help. Your local fire department, school, or community counseling agency can put you in touch with trained experts who know how to teach children about fire in an appropriate way. For more information, go to: <https://www.nfpa.org/-/media/Files/Public-Education/Resources/Safety-tip-sheets/ChildrenAndFireSafetyTips.ashx?la=en>

Educator Tip: Host a child safety open night at your fire department and invite the public. In addition to covering popular non-fire related topics such as car seat installation and/or bicycle safety, encourage your residents to follow these child-related fire safety tips in their homes:

- Supervise young children closely. Do not leave them alone, even for short periods of time.
- Keep matches and lighters in a locked drawer or cabinet, high out of the reach of children.
- Purchase and use only child-resistant lighters. Lighters that look like toys can confuse children and cause fires, injuries, and death and are illegal in Tennessee. Do not buy or use them.
- Teach young children never to touch matches and lighters and to tell a grownup if they find them.
- Take the mystery out of fire by teaching children that fire is a tool for adults, not a toy for children. Never use lighters or matches as a source of amusement for children; they may try to do the same.
- Check under beds and in closets for burned matches, evidence your child might be playing with fire.
- Develop a home fire escape plan, practice it with your children, and designate a safe meeting place outside your residence.
- Teach children not to hide from firefighters but to get out quickly and call for help from another location.
- Show children how to crawl on the floor below smoke, to get out of the home, and stay out.
- Demonstrate how to stop, drop to the ground, and roll if their clothes catch fire.
- Install smoke alarms in every sleeping room, outside each sleeping area, and on every level of the home, including the basement. Familiarize children with the sound of smoke alarms. Test smoke alarms each month and replace their batteries according to manufacturer's instructions. Daylight savings time changes, in the fall and spring, are great times to replace smoke alarm batteries if they are not 10-year batteries.
- Replace any smoke alarm that is at least ten years old.

NFPA/SFMO Messaging:

Matches and Lighters

15.1.1 Keep matches, lighters, and novelty lighters high out of the reach of children, in a locked cabinet.

15.1.2 Purchase and use only child resistant lighters.

15.1.4 Teach young children to tell a grownup when they find matches or lighters and to never touch matches or lighters.

In 2008, Tennessee banned the sale of novelty lighters in the state. These lighters usually resemble cartoon characters, toys, guns, watches, musical instruments, and animals, and often include entertaining