

JULY: Week 4 – Matches & Lighters

Overview: Between 2015 and 2019, Tennessee fire departments responded to 243 structure fires in which the primary heat source was a match or lighter. These fires caused over \$5 million in total damage. While most of these incidents are related to other common accidental house fire causes (smoking, cooking, etc.), occasionally the cause is ruled to be children playing with a heat source.

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 audio and visual effects. They pose a serious fire hazard, especially in the hands of children who mistake them for toys. Toy-like or novelty lighters have been responsible for injuries, deaths, and accidents across the nation.

Below are some facts about children and fire safety. Teach your children the importance of fire-safe habits and practice a home fire escape plan with them today.

Resources: The following resources are available:

- Young fire setters (NFPA)
 - <http://www.nfpa.org/public-education/by-topic/top-causes-of-fire/young-firesetters>
- Play Safe! Be Safe!
 - www.playsafebesafe.com
- Children & fire tip sheet (NFPA)
 - <http://www.nfpa.org/~//media/files/public-education/resources/safety-tip-sheets/childrenandfiresafetytips.pdf>
- Young fire setters YouTube Video (NFPA)
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aqrlUYTKYq8>
- Learn Not To Burn program
 - <http://www.nfpa.org/public-education/resources/education-programs/learn-not-to-burn>

Media Tools: Use the following pre-written media releases and social media posts in your efforts to promote safety with matches and lighters:

- **Twitter**
 - Talk to your kids about not playing with matches and lighters. It may save a life! @TNCommerceInsur #FireSafeTN
 - Keep your home fire free. Always store matches and lighters out of children's reach and sight. #FireSafeTN
 - A child with an interest in fire can lead to fire starting. Talk to your kids about fire safety! @TNCommerceInsure #FireSafeTN
- **Facebook**
 - Between 2015 and 2019, Tennessee fire departments responded to 243 structure fires in which the primary heat source was a match or lighter. These fires caused over \$5 million in total damage. While most of these incidents are related to other common accidental house fire causes (smoking, cooking, etc.), occasionally the cause is ruled to be children playing with a heat source. To learn more about talking to your kids about fire safety and not playing with matches/lighters, go to: <http://www.nfpa.org/public-education/by-topic/top-causes-of-fire/young-firesetters>

- Children experience fire interest. They may ask questions such as how hot is fire or show an interest in fire through playing with fire trucks or cooking on a play stove. This is healthy, and it is time to begin educating about fire. For more information about child fire safety, go to: <http://www.nfpa.org/public-education/by-topic/top-causes-of-fire/young-firesetters>

Educator Tip: The “Play Safe! Be Safe!” children’s fire safety education program is a great way to kick start a child fire setting program in your area. The kit includes interactive materials and games for kids that help teach about not playing with fire. It is often used as an intervention technique with kids who have shown more than just a passing interest in fire setting. Go to www.playsafebesafe.com to order your kit.

NFPA/SFMO Messaging:

Burns

Preventing Scalds and Burns in the Kitchen

9.1.1 Teach children that hot things burn.

Smoking

11.1.9 Keep cigarettes, lighters, matches, and other smoking materials up high out of the reach of children, in a locked cabinet.

Curious kids set fires

- Children 14 and under make up 10-15% of all fire deaths.
- 52% of all child fire deaths involve those under five. These children are usually unable to escape from a fire independently.
- At home, children often play with fire in bedrooms, in closets and under beds to avoid detection. These locations just so happen to contain a lot of flammable materials.
- Too often, child fire-setters are not given proper guidance and supervision by parents and teachers. Consequently, they repeat their fire-setting behavior.