

Children & Fire

When a member of your community is killed in a home fire, it is important to let others know how they can prevent a similar tragedy. As you continue to report on the fire, the U.S. Fire Administration encourages you to remind your audience that many fire deaths and injuries are preventable.

More than 4,000 Americans die each year in fires and more than 20,000 are injured. Many of them might be alive today if they had only had the information they needed to avoid a disaster. The following life-saving tips could make a big difference to your audience. By incorporating them in your story now, while the moment is still fresh, you could help save a life.

Did you know?

- Eighty-two percent of all fire deaths occur in the home.
- Each year about 300 people are killed and \$280 million in property is destroyed in fires attributed to children playing with fire.
- Deaths due to children playing with fire are particularly preventable.
- Having a working smoke alarm reduces one's chance of dying in a fire nearly one-half.

Following these simple fire safety tips can boost survival rates dramatically. Please share them with your readers because knowledge is the best fire protection.

Children & Fire Life-Saving Tips

- Install a smoke alarm on every level of your home. Test smoke alarm batteries every month and change them at least once a year. Consider installing a 10-year lithium battery-powered smoke alarm, which is sealed so it cannot be tampered with or opened.
- Keep matches, lighters and other ignitables in a secured drawer or cabinet out of the reach of children.
- Teach your children to tell you when they find matches and lighters.
- Always dress children in pajamas that meet federal flammability standards. Avoid dressing children for sleep in loose-fitting 100-percent cotton garments, such as oversized T-shirts.
- Teach children not to hide from firefighters, but to get out quickly and call for help from another location.
- Show children how to crawl low on the floor, below the smoke, to get out of the house and stay out.
- Demonstrate how to stop, drop to the ground, and roll if clothes catch fire.
- Develop and practice a home fire escape plan and designate a meeting place outside. Get out and stay out.
- Familiarize children with the sound of your smoke alarm.
- Replace mattresses made prior to the 2007 Federal Mattress Flammability Standard.

- Check under beds and in closets for burnt matches, evidence your child may be playing with fire.
- For more fire safety information for young children, visit <http://www.usfaparents.gov/>.

For more information on the U.S. Fire Administration's Public Education Campaigns or to speak with a USFA spokesperson, please call 202-842-3600. Also visit <http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/> or <http://www.firesafety.gov/> for additional information on fire safety.