

Lighter and Match Safety for Children



Children playing with fire cause hundreds of deaths & injuries each year. Preschoolers & kindergartners are most likely to start these fires, typically by playing with matches and lighters.

Things you should know

PREVENTION

- **NEVER ALLOW** children to play with lighters or matches. Children as young as two years old have been able to operate lighters and start fires with them.
- **MATCHES AND LIGHTERS** in a child's hands can be as deadly as a loaded gun. Keep all matches and lighters out of the reach of children. Store in a high cabinet, preferably locked.
- **DO NOT** leave young children unattended. It only takes a few seconds for a fire to start and quickly burn out of control. Other injuries can happen when children are left unsupervised. Children under 12 should not be left alone and should not be left in charge of younger children.



EDUCATION

- **TEACH** young children to tell a grown-up when they see matches or lighters. Remind them not to pick them up. Children need to understand that fire is difficult to control, it is fast and can hurt as soon as it touches you.
- **NEVER ASSIGN** a young child any tasks that involved the use of a lighter or matches (lighting candles, bringing a lighter to an adult to light a cigarette or the fireplace, etc.)
- **EXPLAIN** that fire is dangerous and only for grown-ups to use carefully. Set a good example by using matches, lighters, flammable liquids and fire safely. Tell children that you will teach them to use matches safely when they are old enough. When your child is old enough, teach them the correct way to light a match. Do this when you are using fire for a reason.



OTHER INFO

- **IT IS IMPORTANT** for grown-ups to discourage unsupervised fire starts.
- **NEVER USE** lighters or matches as a source of amusement for children; they may imitate you.
- **IF YOU OR A FAMILY MEMBER SMOKES**, be sure that matches and smoking materials are fully extinguished. Wet them under a faucet before disposing of them. Use only lighters designed with child-resistant features. Remember, **child-resistant does not mean child-proof**.

DID YOU KNOW?

Between 2007 and 2011, an average of 49,300 fires involving playing with fire were reported to U.S. Municipal fire departments per year. These fires caused annual averages of 80 civilian deaths, 860 civilian injuries, and \$235 million in property damage.

** Younger children were more likely to set fires in homes, while older children & teenagers are more likely to set fires outside. ** Males are more likely to engage in fire-play than females, as 83% of home structure fires and 93% of outside or unclassified fires were set by boys when age was coded as a factor. ** Lighters were the heat source in just over half (52%) of fires in homes involving play. ** 39% of home fires involving play began in a bedroom. ** - National Fire Protection Association

