

Home Fire Safety Plan for Youths Misusing Fire

While following these guidelines will increase the safety in the home, they may not eliminate all fire risks and are not a substitute for caregiver supervision.

Fire Prevention Measures

- Install smoke alarms in the youth's bedroom, closet, hallways and common living areas. Do this immediately.
- Teach youths to check every month to see if the smoke alarm is working.
- Install 2A:10BC fire extinguishers accessible on every level of the house, near youth's bedroom and kitchen.
- Remove all matches from the home or keep in a locked cabinet.
- Deny availability of lighters. Smokers should use only child-resistant lighters and keep them on their person or locked in a cabinet. Keep barbecue lighters in a locked cabinet.
- Empty ashtrays in a metal container before going to bed.
- Store all flammable chemicals such as turpentine, paint thinner, gasoline, lighter fluid, or charcoal starter fluid in a locked cabinet.
- Remove all flammable aerosol sprays and replace with non-pressurized sprays.
- Remove closet doors to avoid a hiding place.
- Increase supervision/24 hour supervision for firesetting youths. Do not let them alone or unsupervised in other youths' homes where matches and lighters may be easily available.
- Prohibit use of incense, candles and cigarettes.

Family Safety Rules

- Set firm rules that youths are not to touch matches, lighters, the stove, barbecue lighters, flares, fireworks, or any other object that could potentially set a fire.
- Forbid youths to touch or play with cigarettes and cigarette butts.
- Instruct youths to tell you immediately if they find lighters or matches. Firesetters should never be told to pick them up and give them to the parent or caregiver.
- Forbid firesetting youths to watch shows or videos with provocative fire themes.
- Inform firesetting youths that you will engage in randomly scheduled searches of their pockets, backpacks and room to search for caches of matches and lighters.
- Inform firesetters of these fire safety rules and decide on the consequences for breaking them. Discuss the rules and consequences with your youth to check for understanding.
- Give permission to all the children in the home to tell on someone who is engaging in the misuse of fire.
- Never threaten to punish a youth with fire to demonstrate the danger of fire.
- Establish a rule that only an adult can start a fire in the burn barrel, pellet stove, wood stove, campfire or fireplace. Prohibit the youth from playing in any of the above.

Fire Education

- Make and practice a fire escape plan with a designated meeting place with your family.
- Teach youths basic fire safety behaviors such as stop, drop and roll, crawl low in smoke and how to call 911.
- Contact your local fire department or the Office of State Fire Marshal for basic fire education for your family.

Removing the risk today prevents the fires of tomorrow.