



Virginia Department of Fire Programs
1005 Technology Park Drive
Richmond, Virginia 23059-4500

MEDIA ALERT

For Immediate Release

Release Date: June 14, 2007

Contact: Olufunke T. Owolabi, MPA
Virginia Department of Fire Programs
Policy and Communications Analyst
tel: 804.249-1982 e-mail: olufunke.owolabi@vdfp.virginia.gov
website: www.vafire.com

School Year Ending: Great Opportunity to Discuss Child Fire Safety

RICHMOND, VIRGINIA: – In the next few days children throughout the Commonwealth will officially end the school year and begin the summer break. Many of these students will trade school work for several weeks of summer camp fun while others will stay home in either a supervised or unsupervised setting.

“Summer break is an extremely exciting time for school-age children but it can also be a dangerous time, especially when children are home during the day and are not prepared for a fire emergency” said W.G. Billy Shelton executive director of the Virginia Department of Fire Programs. “Every home has potential fire hazards, so it is extremely important that parents or caregivers discuss home fire safety with their children to prevent fires.”

Would you know what to do if a fire started in your home? Would your child? Does your answer indicate that your household is not prepared for a fire emergency? The Virginia Department of Fire Programs can help you prepare. Consider the following facts and tips:

Did you know? Fire Facts

- According to the United States Fire Administration, 82 percent of all fire deaths occur in the home.
- Deaths due to fires caused by children playing with fire are particularly preventable.
- Having a working smoke alarm reduces one’s chances of dying in a fire by nearly one-half.

Children and Fire – Safety First

- 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.
- 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 safe meeting place outside the home. Get out and stay out!
- Make sure everyone in your family knows at least two ways to escape from each room in the house.
- For children who are allowed to cook, remind them to never leave cooking unattended. A serious fire can start in seconds.

- If cooking smoke sets off the alarm, do not disable it. Turn on the range fan, open a window or wave a towel near the alarm.
- Teach children what the smoke alarm sounds like and what to do if it sounds.
- Keep towels, pot holders and curtains away from flames and heating elements.
- If a fire breaks out while cooking, put a lid on the pan to smother it. Never throw water on a grease fire.
- Double check the kitchen before leaving the house or taking a nap. Make sure all small appliances are turned off.

###