

# Playing with Fire



Did you know that children under the age of 5 are twice as likely to die in a fire than adults? According to the National Fire Protection Association, children playing with fire started an estimated 13,900 structure fires that were reported to U.S. fire departments, causing an estimated 210 civilian deaths, 1,250 civilian injuries and \$339 million in direct property damage in 2002. Help reduce the number of fires resulting from child fireplay by discussing the following tips with your children:

## 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.

**VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF FIRE PROGRAMS**

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