



Bloomington Fire Department
Public Education Office

**KEEPING
CHILDREN
FIRE SAFE**



**Are Your Children
Playing with**



Most small children have a natural curiosity about fire. They want to know how fire looks and feels, what it can do, and how it will burn.

Children, including toddlers cause thousands of home fires each year by playing with matches, lighters or candles. The average age of a person dying in this type of fire is four years old.

Most fires caused by children playing with lighters, matches or candles tend to begin in bedrooms. The most common items ignited are the mattresses and bedding. Disturbingly, many young children tend to hide under beds or in a closet during house fires - especially fires they've started.

Telling children "don't play with matches" is not enough. Parents and caregivers that are fire smart can protect children from fire and burns.



A young child should be taught to **never** play with matches, cigarette lighters, or multipurpose lighters.

*Does your child know what to do in case of a fire?
Does your family have a fire escape plan?*

JUVENILE FIRE-SETTING

While curiosity about fire is common, some children light fires for other reasons. A change or crisis such as moving to a new area, death or divorce, may trigger fire-setting behavior. This behavior can be a child's way of acting out fear or anxiety.

If you suspect a child is playing with fire or is intentionally setting fires, you can get help by contacting the Bloomington Fire Department at 309-434-2500. The department offers both educational and referral services to youths who are involved in fire play.

Informational Source: NYFD

SMOKE ALARMS SAVE LIVES

CARBON MONOXIDE ALARMS SAVE LIVES

SMOKE ALARMS SAVE LIVES

A Public Fire Safety Message from the Bloomington Fire Department

YOUR SAFETY IS OUR MISSION

PROUDLY SERVING BLOOMINGTON SINCE 1868





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WHAT PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS CAN DO!

- ✓ Have a matches and lighter round-up. Ask your children to tell you where all the matches and lighters are located throughout your home.
- ✓ Store lighters and matches out of sight and reach, preferably in a locked cabinet or drawer. This includes multi-purpose or barbecue style lighters.
- ✓ Check under beds and in closets for hidden lighters, or matches that have been burned. Approximately half of the child fire starters had previously played with matches or a lighter.
- ✓ Use a “don’t touch” approach with children under five years of age. Instruct them to show you any unattended matches or lighter. Reward them with praise when they do.
- ✓ Instruct older children to bring matches or lighters to you.
- ✓ If a child expresses curiosity about fire or has been playing with fire, calmly but firmly explain that matches and lighters are tools, not toys.
- ✓ Do not use lighters as a source of amusement for a child. Children may seek out the lighter and imitate you.
- ✓ Older children should be taught how to use matches and lighters safely. A child’s curiosity may be satisfied if he or she is entrusted to use matches in appropriate situations. Children should be asked to promise to use fire only in the presence of a parent.
- ✓ Never leave a child unattended in a room with a lit candle. Don’t allow teens to have candles in their bedrooms.
- ✓ Smokers should be conscious of children in the home and keep their smoking materials out of sight and reach of children.
- ✓ Children must be supervised. Most fires started by children occur when they do not have adult supervision.

Multi-purpose and cigarette lighters by federal standard must be child-resistant. However child-resistant is not childproof. Children as young as two years old are capable of lighting cigarette and multi-purpose lighters.

BFD'S TOP THREE FIRE SAFETY TIPS

1. **INSTALL SMOKE & CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS**
Test them often to make sure they work. Replace the batteries at least twice a year when you change your clock for daylight savings time.
2. **HAVE A HOME FIRE ESCAPE PLAN**
Develop a home escape plan with your family in case of fire. Practice it. Have a pre-arranged meeting place somewhere outside.
3. **CONDUCT A SAFETY INSPECTION**
Conduct a safety inspection of potential fire hazards in the home.
Eliminate them.
Make every room fire safe.



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