

What You May Not Know About Fire Safety

The Problem

- Each year, more than 600 children ages 14 and under die and nearly 47,000 are injured, in fires.
- Fire and burn injuries are the third leading cause of unintentional injury deaths among Missouri children.
- In Missouri in 2007, 22 children died as a result of unintentional fire/burn injury.
- Young children, ages four and under, are at the greatest risk from home fire- and burn-related death and injury, and are more than twice as likely to die in a fire than the rest of the population.
- Of the 22 children who died from fire/burns in Missouri in 2007, 9 were under the age of five.

Here are some things parents can do to prevent house fires:

- Never walk away from food cooking on the stove.
- Do not leave burning candles unattended.
- A gas range or oven should not be used as a heater, as this can produce toxic fumes.
- When using electric heaters, make sure extension cords can carry the amp load required to operate the heater.
- Do not use electric space heaters in bathrooms, kitchens or other rooms, where they could have contact with water.
- Keep all electric heaters and fuel burning heaters away from furniture and drapes.
- Fireplace chimneys should be cleaned yearly.
- Wood stove chimneys should be cleaned once a month.
- When using a fireplace or wood stove, do not use flammable liquids to start a fire.
- If a fire has been burning, do not go to sleep until making sure the fire in the fireplace is out.
- A glass or metal screen should be sitting in front of a fireplace that is being used. This will prevent embers from coming out from the fireplace.
- Keep trash away from all heat sources.
- Make sure there are working smoke detectors on all levels of the house. Make sure they are mounted to the ceilings.
- Install carbon monoxide detectors in the house.
- Have fire extinguishers in the kitchen and laundry room of the house.
- Keep the clothes dryer lint trap cleaned and lint free.
- As a family, devise an escape plan, in case there is a house fire.
- Talk to your kids about the dangers of playing with matches and lighters.

Here are some things children can do to prevent house fires:

- Don't play with matches or lighters. These can hurt you, and they can start a house or yard fire.
- Make sure to turn off televisions, stereos, lamps and other equipment before leaving your room or home.
- Don't sit too close to a fireplace. The embers from the fire can catch on your clothes.
- Ask your parents where the smoke detectors are in your house, and know what to do if you hear them beep.
- Do not wear loose pajamas or clothing around electric or gas space heaters. Loose clothing can catch on the heater and burn.
- Learn how to stop, drop and roll. This is important to know. If your clothes were on fire, it is best to stop, drop to the floor and roll around on the floor, until the fire is put out, instead of running.
- Know to call 9-1-1 if there is ever a fire in your home.

For more information on fire safety, visit these websites:

Missouri Division of Fire Safety, <http://www.dfs.dps.mo.gov/>
U.S. Fire Administration for Kids, <http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/kids/html/index.shtm>
U.S. Fire Administration, <http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/>
United States Fire Administration, <http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/>
Fire Safety.gov, <http://www.firesafety.gov/>
National Fire Protection Association, <http://www.nfpa.org/>
National Association of State Fire Marshals, <http://www.firemarshals.org/>