

Fire Safety Tips

Eliminate potential hazards:

- Keep matches, lighters and other heat sources out of children's reach. Playing with matches and lighters is the leading cause of fire deaths for children ages 5 and under.
- Keep flammable items such as clothing, furniture, newspapers or magazines away from the fireplace, heater or radiator.
- Keep all portable heaters out of children's reach.
- Avoid plugging several appliance cords into the same electrical socket.
- Replace old or frayed electrical wires and appliance cords, and keep them on top of, not beneath rugs.
- Store all flammable liquids such as gasoline outside of the home.

Prepare your home:

- Install smoke alarms on every level of your home and in every sleeping area. Consider installing both ionization alarms, which are better at sensing flaming fires, and photoelectric alarms, which are better at sensing slow, smoky fires.
- Test smoke alarms monthly. Maintain alarms by replacing batteries at least once a year, and replace alarms every 10 years. Plan and practice two escape routes out of each room of the house. It is important to have an alternate escape route in case one is blocked by fire. Fire drills should be practiced spontaneously throughout the year, as home fires and home fire-related deaths are more likely to occur during cold-weather months, December through February.
- Keep furniture and other heavy objects out of the way of doors and windows, so they won't block an escape.
- Designate an outside meeting place, so all members of the family can be accounted for quickly.

Teach safety:

- Children should know the sound of the smoke alarm. When they hear it, teach them to: Crawl low under smoke. An estimated three-fourths of childhood fire deaths are caused by the smoke and toxic gases produced as a fire develops and spreads.

- Touch doors before opening them. If the door is hot, use an alternative exit.
- Never go back into a burning building. Children should be reminded not to stop or return for anything, such as a toy or to call 9-1-1. A call to 9-1-1 should be placed *after* leaving the premises.
- “Stop, drop and roll.” Upon leaving the burning house or building, children whose clothes have caught on fire should immediately stop, drop to the ground and roll themselves back and forth quickly to extinguish the flames.
- Take children to your local fire station for a tour. Children will be able to see a firefighter in full gear and learn that he or she is someone who saves children – not someone to be afraid of or hide from.
- Also, be sure you’re not teaching your children bad habits. Don’t let them see you smoke in bed or disconnect smoke alarm batteries!

For more information please contact the Stark County SAFE KIDS Coalition at 330-493-9904 x 282 or your local fire department.