



CHILDREN AND HOME FIRES

Fast Facts

- Children under the age of five are twice as likely to die in a home fire than the rest of the population, and child-playing fires are the leading cause of fire deaths among preschoolers.***
- About 300 people per year are killed and \$280 million in property is destroyed in fires attributed to children playing with fire.***
- Just over half of child-playing fires in the home start in a bedroom, and bedding material is most often the first item ignited.**
- About two out of every three child-playing fires – and three out of every four associated deaths and injuries – involve matches or lighters.**
- Children also start fires by playing with candles, fireworks, stoves, and cigarettes.**
- Only twenty-six percent of families have actually developed and practiced a home fire escape plan.*

Preparedness Tips

- ✓ Keep matches, lighters and other ignitable substances in a secured location out of the reach of children, and only use lighters with child-resistant features.
- ✓ Practice your home fire escape plan with your children several times a year. Also practice stop, drop and roll and low crawling.
- ✓ Familiarize children with the sound of your smoke alarm and what to do when they hear it.
- ✓ Teach your children not to be scared of firefighters. Take them to your local fire department to meet them and learn about fire safety.
- ✓ Teach your children to tell you or a responsible adult when they find matches or lighters at home or school.
- ✓ Smoke alarms save lives. Install a smoke alarm near your kitchen, on each level of your home, near sleeping areas, and inside and outside bedrooms if you sleep with doors closed. Use the test button to check it each month. Replace all batteries at least once a year. Having a working smoke alarm reduces the risk of dying in a home fire by nearly half.
- ✓ Visit www.redcross.org/homefires for more information on children and fire safety.