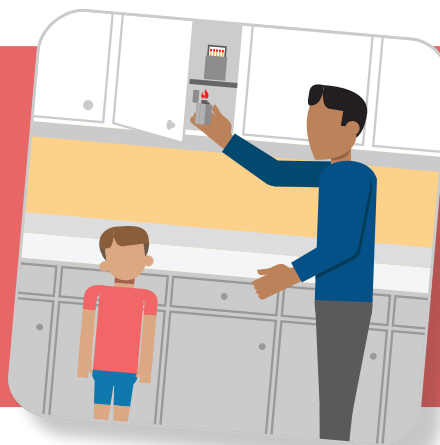


Keep Lighters & Matches Away From Children



About half of youth-set fires are started by children using matches and lighters. The reasons children set fires vary; they may be curious about fire, crying for help, or engaging in delinquent behavior.

Matches and Lighters Can Be Deadly in a Child's Hands

Keep all matches and lighters out of the reach of children. Store in a high cabinet, preferably a locked one. Children as young as two years old have been able to operate lighters and start fires with them.

Don't Leave Young Children Unattended

It only takes a few seconds for a fire to start and quickly burn out of control. Other injuries can happen when children are left unsupervised. Children under 12 should not be left alone and should not be left in charge of younger children.

Teach Young Children to Tell an Adult When They See Matches or Lighters

Remind children not to pick up matches or lighters. Praise children when they tell you they see matches and lighters. Tell them to ask an adult to move matches and lighters to a safe place, out of reach of youngsters.

If You or a Family Member Smoke

Use a heavy ashtray on a sturdy surface where it won't be knocked over. Be sure that matches and smoking materials are fully extinguished. Put it out. All the way. Every time.

Teach Children About the Safe Use of Fire

Explain that fire is dangerous and only for grown-ups to use carefully. Set a good example by using matches, lighters, flammable liquids and fire safely. Tell children that you will teach them to use matches safely when they are old enough. When your child is old enough, teach them the correct way to light a match. Do this when you are using fire for a reason. For example, let your child light the birthday candles on someone else's birthday cake.

If Your Child is Overly Interested in Fire

Your child's natural curiosity about fire needs to be addressed effectively. Children don't understand how dangerous fire is or how quickly it can grow and get out of control. All fires start out small and the potential for a deadly fire is very real.

If your child is overly interested in fire, has started a fire, or has played with matches and lighters, call your local fire department and ask if they have a youth firesetting prevention/intervention program.



Department of Fire Services
www.mass.gov/dfs • (978) 567-3100

