



## **PREVENTING INJURIES TO CHILDREN BY RESIDENTIAL FIRES**

**Because young children may not perceive danger as readily or may lack the ability to escape a life-threatening fire, make sure they are not exposed to open flames or other fire risks, and take precautions to avoid fire in the home.**

- Install smoke alarms in your home on every level and in every sleeping area. Test them once a month. Replace the batteries at least two times a year, such as when daylight savings time starts and ends. Ten-year lithium alarms do not require battery changes. Replace all alarms every 10 years. For the best protection against different types of fires, consider installing both ionization alarms (better at sensing flaming fires) and photoelectric alarms (better at sensing slow, smoky fires).
- Keep children away from cooking and heating appliances. Never leave the kitchen while you are cooking. If you must leave the room, take the child with you.
- Keep matches, candles, gasoline, lighters and all other flammable materials locked away and out of children's reach.
- Never leave a burning candle unattended. Place candles in a safe location away from combustible materials and where children or pets cannot tip them over.
- Place space heaters at least 3 feet from curtains, papers, furniture and other flammable materials. Make sure heaters are stable, and use protective coverings.
- Avoid plugging several appliance cords into the same electrical socket. Replace old or frayed electrical wires and appliance cords, and keep all cords on top of rugs. Cover unused electrical outlets with safety devices.
- Never smoke in bed. Extinguish all cigarettes before leaving home or going to bed.

**Make sure children are prepared to escape in case of fire.**

- Plan and practice several fire escape routes from each room of the home, and identify a safe outside meeting place. Practicing an escape plan may help children, who can become frightened and confused, to escape to safety in a fire.

- Sleep with bedroom doors closed to prevent smoke, gas or heat from entering the rooms.
- Keep furniture and heavy objects away from doors and windows, so they won't block escape.
- Teach children never to hide in a fire. Teach them the proper way to get out of the house: Leave immediately if you hear the smoke alarm, smell smoke or see flames. Do not hide in closets, under beds, in bathtubs or in other areas of the home. Stay low and crawl. Always feel doors with the back of your hand before opening them. If one is hot, do not open it; find another way out. Do not stop or return for toys, pets or anything else.
- Also teach children never to go back into a burning building. Call 911 or the fire department only from a neighbor's home or a cell phone outside the home. When firefighters arrive, immediately tell them if someone is inside or missing.

