

The Department of Campus Safety urges Community members to “Stay Fire Smart! Don’t Get Burned.”

Once a child touches a hot stove, as the cliché goes—he learns his lesson, stay away from a hot stove. This cliché does not take into account the pain and suffering from burns and burns should not be part of the learning process.

That’s why the Department of Campus Safety is teaming up with the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) for Fire Prevention Week 2009 – October 4-10 – to urge all Manhattanville community members to “Stay Fire Smart! Don’t Get Burned.” This year’s campaign focuses on ways to keep homes fire safe and prevent painful burns.

The statistics are staggering. Each year roughly 3,000 people dies as a result of home fires and burns, and more than 200,000 individuals are seen in the nation’s emergency rooms for burn injuries.

The most common types of burn injuries result from fire or flame burns, scalds and contact burns. Burns are painful and can result in serious scarring and even death. When we take extra caution in our homes to ensure that the curling iron is out of children’s reach or pot handles are turned away from the edge of the stove, such injuries are entirely preventable. Keeping our homes safe from fire and preventing devastating burn injuries is a healthy change we can make happen.

By following simple safety rules, you can “Stay Fire Smart! Don’t Get Burned.”

- Keep hot foods and liquids away from tables and counter edges so they cannot be pulled or knocked over.
- Have a 3-foot “kid-free” zone around the stove.
- Never hold a child in your arms while preparing hot food or drinking a hot beverage.
- Be careful when using things that get hot such as curling irons, oven, irons, lamps, heaters.
- Install tamper-resistant receptacles to prevent a child from sticking an object in the outlet.
- Never leave a child alone in a room with a lit candle, portable heater, lit fireplace or stove, or where a hot appliance might be in use.
- Wear short or close-fitting sleeves when cooking.
- Set your hot water temperature no higher than 120 degrees.
- Install anti-scald valves on shower heads and faucets.

Fire Facts

- In 2008, U.S. fire departments responded to 386,500 home fires. These fires killed 2,755 civilians. Eighty-three percent of all fire deaths resulted from home fires.

- Someone was injured in a home fire every 40 minutes and roughly eight people died in home fires every day during 2008.
- A fire department responded to a home fire every 81 seconds.
- Almost two-thirds of reported home fire deaths in 2003-2006 resulted from fires in homes with no smoke alarms or no working smoke alarms.
- About 1/3 of home fires and deaths happened in the months of December, January and February.
- Cooking continues to be the leading cause of home fires and home fire injuries.
- Smoking materials caused one of every four home fire deaths.
- The kitchen is the leading area of origin for home fires. However, bedrooms and living/family rooms are the leading areas of origin for home fire deaths.

Burns

- Burn injuries result in hundreds of thousands of emergency room visits a year. Thermal burns outnumber scalds nearly two-to-one.

Cooking

- Cooking is the leading cause of home fires, accounting for 40% of reported home fires and 36% of related injuries.
- Unattended cooking is the leading cause of cooking fires.
- U.S. fire departments responded to 146,400 home structure fires involving cooking equipment in 2005. These fires caused 480 civilian fire deaths, 4,690 civilian fire injuries and \$876 million in direct property damage.
- Twelve percent of the fires occurred when something that could catch fire was too close to the equipment.

Smoking

- Smoking materials (i.e., cigarettes, cigars, pipes, etc.) are the leading cause of fire deaths (roughly one in four) in the United States.
- There were 142,900 smoking-material fires in the United States in 2006, causing 780 civilian deaths and 1,600 civilian injuries.
- Older adults are at the highest risk of death or injury from smoking-material fires even though they are less likely to smoke than younger adults.
- The most common items first ignited in home smoking-material fire deaths were upholstered furniture and mattresses or bedding.
- One out of four victims of fatal smoking-related fires is not the smoker whose cigarette started the fire.

Heating

- In 2006, heating equipment was involved in an estimated 64,100 reported home structure fires, 540 civilian deaths, 1,400 civilian injuries, and \$943 million in direct property damage.

- In 2006 heating equipment fires accounted for 16% of all reported home fires (second behind cooking) and 21% of home fire deaths.
- More than half of all heating related fire deaths in 2003-2006 resulted from fires in December, January, and February.
- Space heaters result in far more fires and losses than central heating devices and have higher risks relative to usage.
- Fixed or portable space heaters were involved in 4% of the home fires and 17% of the home fire deaths.
- Most of the space heater fires were caused by the space heater being too close to things that could burn.

Electrical

- Electrical distribution or lighting equipment was involved in 25,100 reported home structure fires in 2006. These fires caused 370 deaths.
- Lamps, light fixtures and light bulbs accounted for 5,500 home structure fires per year, during 2003-2006.
- Wiring switches or outlets caused more than 10,000 home fire structures per year. Cord or plugs accounted for 2,600. Cords and plugs accounted for 1% of the home fires and 5% of home fire deaths.

Intentional Fires

- In 2003-2006 17,900 intentionally set home structures fires were reported each year, resulting in 320 deaths and \$542 million in property loss.
- Roughly half of the people arrested for arson are under age 18.

Smoke Alarms

- Smoke alarms that are properly installed and maintained play a vital role in reducing fire deaths and injuries. Having a working smoke alarm cuts the chances of dying in a reported fire in half.
- A 2008 U.S. telephone survey found that 96% of U.S. households had at least one smoke alarm, yet in 2003-2006, no smoke alarms were present or none operated in two out of the five (41%) of the reported home fires.
- Almost two-thirds of reported home fire deaths in 2003-2006 resulted from fires in homes with no smoke alarms or no working smoke alarms.
- No smoke alarms were present in 40% of the home fire deaths.
- In more than half of the reported home fires in which the smoke alarms were present but did not operate, batteries were missing or disconnected. Nuisance alarms were the leading reason for disconnected smoke alarms.

Home Escape Planning

- According to an NFPA survey, only one in four Americans have actually developed and practiced a [home fire escape plan](#) (PDF, 632 KB) to ensure they could escape quickly and safely.
- While 66% of Americans have an escape plan in case of a fire, only 35% of those have practiced it.
- One-third of American households who made an estimate thought they would have at least 6 minutes before a fire in their home would become life-threatening. The time available is often less. And only 8% said their first thought on hearing a smoke alarm would be to get out!
- Eighteen to 24-year-olds are the least likely to have even developed an escape plan.

Fire Prevention Week is actively supported by fire departments across the country. For 85 years, fire departments have observed Fire Prevention Week, making it the longest running public health and safety observance on record.