SAFETY SENSE

Children and Fire: Know The Risks

(NAPSA)—According to the United States Fire Administration (USFA), 3,650 children under age 14 are killed or injured in residential fires each year.

More than half of the children who die in those fires are under age five and often too young to recognize, and help themselves in, an emergency. Also, children playing with fire start two out of every five fires that kill young children.

For these reasons, it is very important that parents and caregivers talk to children about fire dangers and take proper measures to ensure their homes are fire safe and that the whole family will be able to escape in case a fire does occur.

The U.S. Fire Administration offers the following fire safety tips for parents, caregivers and households with small children:

Preventing Fire

• Children are curious about fire. Keep matches, lighters and other ignitable materials in a secure place and out of their reach. Teach children the dangers of fire and not to play with it.

• Have your children tell you when they find matches and lighters.

• Check under beds and in closets for burnt matches—evidence that your child may be playing with fire.

• Replace mattresses made prior to the 1973 Federal Mattress Flammability Standard.

Escaping Fire

• Install and maintain a smoke alarm on every floor of your home and outside of sleeping areas.

Test the batteries monthly. Conventional smoke alarms require yearly battery changes, while lithium powered alarms may last up to ten years without a battery change. Whichever type is used, having working smoke alarms nearly doubles one's chance of surviving a fire.

• Familiarize children with the sound of your smoke alarms and what to do if one goes off: crawl under smoke, leave the building

It's important for parents to talk to children about fire dangers and how to escape should a fire occur.

and go to a designated meeting place outside.

• Develop and practice a fire escape plan with your family. Identify two ways to escape from every room in your home.

• Firefighters may look scary to children. Teach them not to hide from firefighters in case of fire.

Preventing Burns

• Teach children how to stop, drop and roll to minimize burns if clothing ignites.

• Dress children in pajamas that meet federal flammability standards. Avoid loose-fitting 100 percent cotton garments, like oversized t-shirts as sleepwear.

The United States Fire Administration, an entity of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, is the federal leader in the areas of public fire education and awareness, fire service training, fire-related technology and data collection.

For more information on children's fire safety or other fire safety topics, please write to the United States Fire Administration, Publications Office, 16825 South Seton Avenue, Emmitsburg, MD 21727 or visit www.usfa.fema.gov.