



The **NEW JERSEY DIVISION OF FIRE SAFETY** is the central fire service agency in the State and is responsible for the development and enforcement of the State Uniform Fire Code, public fire safety education programs and firefighter training programs. It is housed within the State's Department of Community Affairs.

For more information, visit the Division's website at:

[www.nj.gov/dca/dfs](http://www.nj.gov/dca/dfs)



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# Children & Fire Safety

## FIRE SAFETY TIPS



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Commissioner

## Greetings from the Department of Community Affairs

Far too many home fires have been started by innocent children who were completely unaware of the consequences of their actions.

As a parent, you can help minimize the risks involving fire your children might take by eliminating situations that are potentially hazardous and teaching children about the proper uses and potential dangers of fire.

This brochure will help keep you and your family safe from accidental housefires.



## Provide Your Children With Basic Fire Safety Instruction

Children under the age of 5 make up only 7% of the American population, but account for 23% of the country's fire deaths. Children generally do not understand what fire is capable of doing, or how quickly a fire can rage out of control. At the youngest age possible, teach your children that matches and cigarette lighters are not toys to be played with, but tools to be used only by adults for acceptable purposes. Teach them about the legitimate uses of fire - for cooking, heating the home, barbecuing outdoors, etc. Teach them also that fire can be harmful, but be sure to do it in a way that is appropriate for their level of understanding. When they are ready, teach them to bring any matches or lighters they find to an adult.

## Never Assume Your Children Won't Do Something Dangerous

Children have a natural sense of curiosity, but they don't always realize the dangers associated with their actions.



## Help Your Children Think Through Consequences

Teach them what is safe and what is not safe. For example, explain exactly why it is unsafe for a child to play with matches in his or her home; how certain surfaces in the kitchen could cause a bad burn if touched; or how touching electrical wiring or appliances could cause a severe shock.

## Be A Safety Inspector

Take precautions before your children start playing. Inspect their play areas and place restrictions on the areas where they can go without adult supervision - areas like the kitchen when food is cooking or the bathroom when hot water is running. Inspect play areas not only for matches and lighters, but also for possible hazards from electrical outlets, electrical power cords, etc.

## If Your Child Gets Hurt

Treat the injury first, then review the actions that led to the injury. Because the injury may have already helped the child learn the consequences of his or her actions, it may not be necessary to impose a severe penalty. If your child did something that was dangerous but didn't harm anyone, explain what could have happened because of the careless behavior. Use your judgement to determine if discipline is necessary.

## Don't Forget To Praise

Congratulate your children when they make correct decisions while playing. Positive encouragement helps build self-confidence. The more self-confidence your children have, the less likely they will be to succumb to peer pressure - now or in the future.

