



**Office of the Chief**

Chief John R. Batiste  
"Service with Humility"

**\*\*\*For Immediate Release\*\*\***

Captain Neil Weaver  
Government and Media Relations

**State Fire Marshal's Office  
State Fire Marshal Chad Cross**

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**Contact:** Deputy State Fire Marshal Gregory Baruso

**Phone:** (360) 596-3929

**Email:** [fpbio@wsp.wa.gov](mailto:fpbio@wsp.wa.gov)

**Twitter:** @WaFireMarshal

**Youth Firesetter Prevention**

**Olympia** – When children are exposed to flame or fires, their curiosity might be peaked. Children may find fire fascinating because it engages all five senses; sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch. They may not understand that fires used for cooking, heating, or other reasons are controlled and used for specific purposes. They may not understand the devastation hostile fires can cause like the loss of property, injuries, or death.

From 2019 through 2021 local fire agencies in Washington State reported 764 fire incidents that began by the playing of a heat source, resulting in over \$5 million in damages.

To help prevent youth firesetting, the Washington State Fire Marshal's Office asks that you take the following steps:

- Keep matches and lighters out of the reach of children, up high, and preferably in a locked cabinet.
- Closely supervise children, making sure that they are kept away from other fire sources, including lit candles, cigarettes, bonfires, and stoves.
- Establish clear rules and consequences about unsupervised and unauthorized uses of fire.
- Teach children that they must tell a grownup when matches or lighters are found.
- Talk with children about what they are seeing online in video games, on TV, in movies, and on social media, and teach them specific ways to resist the peer pressure to misuse fire.
- Give praise for showing respect and age-appropriate responsible behavior toward fire.
- If needed, contact your local fire department to see if they have a youth firesetting program.

For more information, contact the State Fire Marshal's Office at 360-596-3929.

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The State Fire Marshal's Office is a Bureau of the Washington State Patrol, providing fire and life safety services to the citizens of Washington State including inspections of state licensed facilities, plan review of school construction projects, licensing of fire sprinkler contractors and pyrotechnic operators, training Washington States firefighters, and collecting emergency response data.

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