



Washington State Patrol

# STATE FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE

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

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Government and Media Relations

State Fire Marshal's Office  
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## Prevent Youth Fire Setting

**Olympia** – Children often associate fire with celebration and fun – such as blowing out candles on a birthday cake, toasting marshmallows over bonfires, or watching fireworks displays. Many children are naturally curious about fire and find it exciting to watch a flame appear from a lighter or a match. However, young children are not able to understand the dangers of fire. Every year, children playing with fire cause hundreds of deaths and injuries.

In 2022, Washington State reported sixty-eight "Playing with a Heat Source" fires with a total dollar loss of over \$688,000. Children playing with fire were included in this category.

While curiosity is normal, there are things you can do to prevent your child from experimenting with fire.

- 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 fire sources.
- Explain that fire moves very fast and can hurt as soon as it touches them.
- Teach young children to never touch matches or lighters.
- Establish clear rules and consequences about unsupervised and unauthorized uses of fire.
- Be a good example! Always use fire sources in a safe manner, and never treat them as toys.
- Talk with children about what their friends or other children are doing with fire. Teach them specific ways to resist the peer pressure to misuse fire.
- Give praise for showing respectful and age-appropriate responsible behavior toward fire.

If you feel that your child is at a higher risk of experimenting with fire, contact your local fire department. Many fire departments have programs available to teach your child about fire safety.

For more information, contact the State Fire Marshal's Office at (360) 596-3904.

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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. These services include public education, licensing and certification of the fire sprinkler, fireworks, and cigarette industries, data collection and analysis, fire and life safety inspections for state facilities, plan review of school construction projects, all-risk mobilization of statewide fire service resources, hazardous materials training, and the training and certification of firefighters.

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