



Fire Department

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MEDIA ADVISORY

RESIDENTIAL FIRES DUE TO SMOKING

On June 4, 2006, the Milwaukee Fire Department responded to a two-alarm fire that destroyed one home (\$157,000) and damaged two other homes (\$30,000 and \$3,000). Four occupants and one firefighter were injured in the fire. The cause of the fire was careless use of smoking materials.

In 2002, according to National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), lighted tobacco products caused an estimated 14,450 residential fires, 520 fire fatalities, 1,330 injuries and \$371 million in property damage. Smoking was responsible for only 4% of residential fires, but 19% of fire deaths and 9% of injuries. 2002 was the first year in a number of years that smoking was *not* the major cause of fire fatalities.

Almost half of the victims of these fatal fires were asleep when the fire occurred. Most of the victims were "intimate with ignition," meaning their actions were directly related to the ignition source. These actions also placed the victim in close proximity to the point of origin, thus limiting the effectiveness of smoke detectors to alert them.

The Milwaukee Fire Department asks smokers to help prevent smoking related fires by:

- Ø Having a working smoke detector on each level of the home.
- Ø Having large sturdy ashtrays and emptying them often, making sure the ashes are out.
- Ø Keeping matches, lighters, and cigarettes away from children.
- Ø Not smoking in bed.
- Ø Not allowing smoking in the home if someone is on home oxygen
- Ø Not mixing smoking and excessive drinking.

Help the Milwaukee Fire Department keep Milwaukee fire safe. Your actions could save a life, maybe your own.

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