

# Wrightsville Beach Fire Department News Release



From: Frank Smith, Fire Chief

Date: 2/26/08

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## SMOKING AND HOME FIRES

### **If you Smoke... Put it Out. All the Way. Every Time.**

Smoking is the leading cause of home fire deaths across the country. To prevent this unnecessary loss of life, the Wrightsville Beach Fire Department (WBFD) is joining the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) in launching a nationwide **Smoking & Home Fires Campaign** designed to raise awareness and stop home fires caused by smoking before they start.

The USFA's Smoking & Home Fires Campaign is aimed at alerting people, especially smokers and those who live with them, to the fact that careless smoking is the number one cause of preventable home fire deaths. The goal is to prevent fire deaths by urging smokers to *Put it Out. All the Way. Every time.*

On average, 1,000 people are killed in smoking-related home fires every year, and most people are asleep when the fires occur. Most fires caused by smoking materials start on beds, furniture, or in trash. Not only smokers are killed in these fires. Other members of the household are also at risk. In fact, one in four people killed in these kinds of fires were not the smokers themselves.

Smoking-related fires can be prevented by taking a few simple precautions. Smokers and those who live with smokers are urged to take the following actions:

- Use deep ashtrays with a wide, stable base. If it wobbles, it won't work.
- Ashtrays should be set on something sturdy and hard to ignite, like a table.
- Chairs and sofas burn fast and give off thick, deadly smoke. Never put ashtrays on them, and check for cigarettes under cushions if people have been smoking in your home.
- Always make sure cigarettes and ashes are out.
- Soak cigarette butts and ashes in water before throwing them away. NEVER toss hot cigarette butts or ashes in the trash.

- When smoking outside of your home, beware of the wind. Don't allow cigarettes or ashes to blow out of ashtrays and lodge in combustible decking or landscape bedding (pine straw). This is a frequent cause of smoking-related fires here at Wrightsville Beach.
- If you are drowsy or falling asleep, put out your cigarette. Smoking in bed is just plain WRONG!
- NEVER smoke in a home where oxygen is in use. Oxygen and fire are an explosive combination. Oxygen makes any fire burn hotter and faster.

The following fire safety tips are ALWAYS important to protect you and your family from ALL types of home fires.

- Place working smoke alarms on every level of your home and in every sleeping area. Test smoke alarms monthly.
- Have a home escape plan and practice it. Plan two ways to escape from every room. Practice the escape plan at least twice a year.

For more information on the **Smoking & Home Fires Campaign** please visit [www.usfa.fema.gov/smoking](http://www.usfa.fema.gov/smoking).

Putting out a cigarette the right way only takes seconds. It is up to you to make sure your cigarette is put out, all the way, every time.

***If You Smoke... Put it Out. All the Way. Every Time.***