

For Immediate Release

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Tobacco-Free Community Partners Facts and Fire Safety Tips

Cigarettes are the leading cause of fatal fires in the United States and Vermont.

Smoking-material fires kill over 1,000 people a year with 34 percent of those fatalities being children of smokers. In May of 2006, Vermont passed Act 68 which requires all cigarettes sold in Vermont meet fire-safe criteria. However, there are still precautions individuals can take to further reduce the chances of a cigarette fire.

Practice the following tips for smoking material fire safety:

- Install a smoke alarm in every level of your home and test the batteries monthly.
- Keep a fire extinguisher in every part of your home where a fire is most likely to occur such as the kitchen, living room, laundry room, and bedroom.
- Keep smoking materials away from anything that can burn.
- Never smoke in bed or when you are drowsy, intoxicated, or medicated.
- Use a large, deep, non-tip ashtray to prevent the ashtray or contents from tipping over.
- Completely douse butts and ashes with water before disposing of them in an airtight metal container. Ashes dumped in trash cans can smolder for hours and then ignite.

- Encourage smoking outside rather than inside.
- Keep smoking materials, lighters, and matches out of reach of children.
- If you smoke, purchase fire-safe cigarettes if you are buying cigarettes from anywhere other than Vermont, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, or New York.
- Never leave cigarettes, cigars, or pipes unattended.

These tips have been brought to you by the Tobacco-Free Community Partners. The Coalition is an education, resource, prevention, and connection network whose mission is to prevent first time tobacco use among youth and reduce its use across all ages in the Bennington Area. To learn more about the Tobacco-Free Community Partners, contact the coordinator Julie Krawczyk at (802) 447-6478 or view the Web site at www.tobaccofreebennington.org.