

Smoking is the number one preventable cause of home fire deaths in Canada

What have you got to lose? That's the theme of National Non-Smoking Week, January 18 - 24, 2009 given that smoking is the number one preventable cause of home fire deaths in Canada. Fires caused by cigarettes cause one out of every five fire deaths in Canada. Most fires caused by smoking materials start on beds, furniture or in the trash. The Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs estimates that approximately 70 deaths and 300 injuries are caused by careless smoking every year. Additionally, the cost of smoking-related home and forest fires in Canada was \$85.5 million (2002).

How you can prevent home fires caused by smoking:

- **Being a non-smoker is the best way to prevent home fires caused by smoking.** Home fires can be caused by smoking inside and outside the home. A lit cigarette left alone in a room, dropped accidentally in a chair or bed, or hot butts and ashes tossed away before completely out can cause large fires in seconds. Non-smoking parents who enforce no-smoking rules at home are also less likely to have teens who experiment with smoking.
- **If you smoke, your best choice is to smoke outside.** This way you protect your family from the harmful effects of second-hand smoke, a known cause of cancer and other diseases in humans, and greatly reduce the risk of a smoking-related fire in your home. There is no known safe level of exposure to second-hand tobacco smoke.
- **Use a deep, stable metal container** (like a coffee can) with water or sand to hold butts and ashes.
- **Run ashes and butts under water before throwing away** or if using sand, leave butts and ashes for 2-3 days before emptying in the garbage.
- **Keep matches and lighters away from children.** Out of sight and ideally locked in a cupboard or container.
- **Use fire-safe cigarettes.** Since October 2005 cigarettes made in, or imported for sale into, Canada must meet an ignition propensity standard. Contraband (illegal) cigarettes may not meet these standards. A Health Canada study also, showed that 28 well known cigarette brands currently marketed in Canada are not fire-safe. *Even so called "fire-safe" cigarettes still cause fires and more importantly, these cigarettes can harm your health and shorten your lifespan.*
- **Place smoke alarms (detectors) on all levels of your home, especially in sleeping areas,** test the batteries at least monthly, and change the batteries each spring and fall when the time changes. Smoking materials can smolder undetected for hours in upholstered furnishings or mattresses before breaking out in flames.
- If you smoke inside, use deep stable ashtrays, run butts and ashes under water before putting in the garbage, and never smoke where oxygen is in use.

People thinking about stopping or smoking less can call or click the Smoker's Helpline for free phone or online support and information about other programs and resources available

1-877-513-5333 www.smokershelpline.ca



Smoke-Free Nova Scotia