



STATE OF NEW YORK DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH



DIVISION OF HOMELAND SECURITY
AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

OFFICE OF FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL

December 2010

Dear Colleague:

This Fires In Residences Eliminated (F.I.R.E.) toolkit is a resource designed to empower public health educators to increase the visibility of the public health impact of residential fires and fire-related deaths and injuries in their communities. The goal of this initiative is to promote collaboration between the public health sector and fire safety professionals to reduce the toll of residential fires. Contributions and technical assistance from the New York State Office of Fire Prevention and Control (OFPC) will aid in the achievement of this goal.

Despite significant progress in the last 30 years, the United States still has one of the highest fire-related death tolls in the industrialized world. Fires are more common than any other disaster that strikes a home. Although the news media and public tend to portray and perceive residential fire deaths and injuries as unavoidable tragedies, they are frequently the result of actions and errors by occupants combined with the flaws and vulnerabilities of home products. Therefore, as with many injuries, simple changes in behavior can prevent many home fires.

The prevention of unintentional injuries is one of the priorities identified in the Prevention Agenda promoted by State Health Commissioner Richard F. Daines, M.D. to improve the health of all New Yorkers. In New York State, fire-related injuries are among the ten leading causes of death due to injury for children (birth to age 19) and adults (age 45 and older). Those at highest risk for home fire deaths and injuries include some of our most vulnerable citizens: children under age five, adults age 65 and over, and people with physical disabilities.

OFPC believes that the best fire is the one that never starts and the safest person is the one never exposed to fire danger in the first place. These goals are achieved through fire prevention. Buildings are constructed in accordance with building codes and fire systems that enhance survival but, ultimately, the most significant factor in prevention and survival is human behavior. Safe behavior results from education, the area where you have the greatest potential for impact.

The toolkit design features resources reflecting 10 “take home” messages based on major themes in residential fire safety and prevention. Each section has its own table of contents to identify information for public health professionals, the general public and other audiences. A follow-up online survey will be sent to everyone who receives the toolkit. Your feedback will help us evaluate the quality and usability of the materials and will be greatly appreciated.

You can make a difference in reducing fire loss numbers and making those with whom you interact, and those they in turn teach and serve, safer. Please join us in promoting fire safety to save lives in your community. For more information or assistance, please contact the NYSDOH Bureau of Injury Prevention at injury@health.state.ny.us or the OFPC Bureau of Fire Prevention at 518-474-6746.

Sincerely,

Susan Hardman
Director, Bureau of Injury Prevention
NYSDOH

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'P.D. Martin'.

Paul Martin
Chief, Bureau of Fire Prevention
OFPC