



ARSON

PREVENTION

Arson affects everyone. No exclusions. Workers lose jobs, towns and cities lose tax dollars, burned buildings create blighted areas, and innocent people are injured or killed.

Arson's impact on the national and state economy is being recognized more by concerned citizens and organizations. Obviously, an effective battle against arson can be accomplished only by the concerted action of dedicated groups and individuals.

- Arson killed more than 500 Americans in 2000, an increase of 36.5% from 1999.
- An estimated 75,000 structure fires were deliberately set or suspected of having been deliberately set, an increase of 4.2% from a year ago.
- In the past 15 years, arson fires have taken the lives of 38 Minnesotans and caused over \$250 million in property loss.

In association with



www.fire.state.mn.us



Arson Burns Everyone

Fireplay, Firesetting, & Juvenile Arson

WHAT CAN I DO?

One thing to do is report suspicious activity near a house or other building to the local police.

Residential Precautions

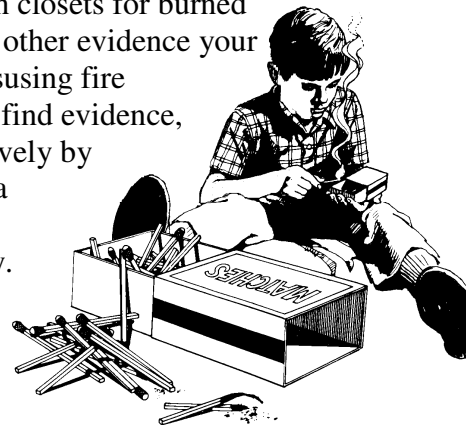
- Secure your home and garage by locking doors, windows and gates. Make sure home windows, screens and doors can be opened easily from inside, if needed for escape.
- Trim shrubs away from doors and windows to improve visibility.
- Leave your outside lights on when it's dark.
- Team up with your neighbors to form a "Neighborhood Watch" group.
- Clear garage areas of materials that could fuel a fire. Eliminate wastepaper, piles of grass, weeds, litter or other combustibles from the areas around buildings.

Business Precautions

- Place locks on commercial dumpsters and do not overfill.
- Locate commercial dumpsters and other containers at least five feet away from building walls and openings. Use only metal or metal lined containers.

Parents have the primary responsibility to ensure a safe environment and teach safe behaviors. Effectively done, these lessons will impact not just the child but the community as a whole. Below are just a few of the things parents can do to help:

- **Set a good example** - Install and maintain smoke alarms and fire extinguishers per manufacturers' directions, and always use fire in a safe manner.
- **Take responsibility for fire safety** - Point out to your children the fire safety rules you follow throughout the day and discuss the dangers of fire.
- **Control access to fire** - Keep all ignition devices out of reach of children and teach them to notify an adult if they find them.
- **Identify telltale signs** - Check in waste baskets, under the beds, and in closets for burned matches or other evidence your child is misusing fire and, if you find evidence, react positively by using it as a teaching opportunity.



While most people have a fascination with fire, young people lack the experience necessary to make appropriate decisions in regard to fire. The key to a solution for this problem lies in linking the child and their family with the appropriate agency to address the behavior.

The Minnesota State Fire Marshal Division has developed this helpline as an opportunity for citizens to find the help they need to curb this dangerous behavior of firesetting by juveniles.

Juvenile Firesetter Helpline

1-800-500-8897

This sign is posted at all suspected arson fires. If you have information that will aid in the apprehension of arsonists, contact the Arson Hotline.

