



American Burn Association

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Fire-Safe Cigarettes American Burn Association Policy Statement

Cigarettes are the leading cause of fatal fires in the United States, killing 700 to 900 people every year and injuring thousands more. Those killed or injured in these fires are oftentimes not the smoker, but family members, children or neighbors. In 2003 there were 325,600 smoking material structure fires, killing 760 people, injuring 1520 more and resulting in property losses in the hundreds of millions of dollars.

The typical scenario for fires cause by cigarettes is the following: a lit cigarette is forgotten or dropped by a smoker whose alertness may be impaired by alcohol or medication. The cigarette fire can smolder for hours hidden between seat cushions or elsewhere before it flares up into a deadly blaze. "Fire safe" or reduced ignition propensity cigarettes have less porous paper, less dense tobacco, a smaller diameter, filter tip and no added citrates to the paper. These design changes result in no change in taste to the cigarette.

Fire safe cigarette legislation has passed in 22 states: New York, Vermont, California, Illinois, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Maryland, Kentucky, Utah, Oregon, New Jersey, Minnesota, Montana, Iowa, Maine, Texas, Rhode Island, Delaware, Connecticut, Louisiana, Arkansas, and North Carolina, representing more than 52% of US population.

The American Burn Association has been a strong advocate for the development of fire-safe cigarettes for more than 15 years, supporting past legislation on the issue and participating in two US Government studies that successfully demonstrated the technical and economic feasibility of commercial production of fire safe cigarettes.

The American Burn Association strongly and actively supports the passage of legislation mandating the manufacture and sale of fire-safe cigarettes along with the efforts of the Fire Safe Cigarette Coalition, a national group of fire service members, consumer, elderly and disabled rights advocates, medical and public health practitioners and other who are committed to saving lives and preventing injuries by reducing the threat of cigarette-ignited fires.. The ABA is a member of the Fire Safe Cigarette Coalition.

For more information, contact Kitty Vineyard at the American Burn Association at (312) 642-9260 or vineyard@ameriburn.org.