



**For Immediate Release
October 2, 2009**

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Portsmouth Fire Department Urges Residents To “Stay Fire Smart! Don’t Get Burned”

Portsmouth, VA -- Once a child touches a hot stove, as the cliché goes—he learns his lesson, stay away from a hot stove. This cliché does not take into account the pain and suffering from burns, and burns should not be part of the learning process.

That’s why the Portsmouth Fire Department is teaming up with the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) for Fire Prevention Week 2009 – October 4th through October 10th – to urge Portsmouth residents to **“Stay Fire Smart! Don’t Get Burned.”** This year’s campaign focuses on ways to keep homes fire safe and prevent painful burns. Additionally, fire safety educators will be teaching local residents how to plan and practice escape from a home in case a fire occurs.

The statistics are staggering. Each year roughly 3,000 people die as a result of home fires and burns, and more than 200,000 individuals visit the nation’s emergency rooms for burn injuries. Within the last year, Portsmouth had three fire deaths and experienced 204 residential fires that sustained damage.

“The most common types of burn injuries result from fire or flame burns, scalds and contact burns,” said Mike Stockton, Fire Marshal. “Burns are painful and can result in serious scarring and even death. When we take extra precautions in our homes to ensure that the curling iron is out of a child’s reach or pot handles are turned away from the edge of the stove, we are taking steps to prevent injuries. Keeping our homes safe from fire and preventing devastating burn injuries is a healthy change we can make happen.”

By following simple safety rules, you can **“Stay Fire Smart! Don’t Get Burned.”**

- Keep hot foods and liquids away from tables and counter edges so they cannot be pulled or knocked over.
- Have a 3-foot “kid-free” zone around the stove.
- Never hold a child in your arms while preparing hot food or drinking a hot beverage.
- Be careful when using things that get hot such as curling irons, ovens, irons, lamps, or heaters.
- Install tamper-resistant receptacles to prevent a child from sticking an object into an electrical outlet.
- Never leave a child alone in a room with a lit candle, portable heater, lit fireplace or stove, or where a hot appliance might be in use.
- Wear short or close-fitting sleeves when cooking.
- Set your hot water temperature no higher than 120 degrees to prevent scalding.
- Install anti-scald valves on shower heads and faucets.

The Portsmouth Fire Department will be distributing fire safety information at shopping centers throughout the City during the week. Additionally, speakers will be conducting fire safety talks for civic groups. If citizens would like to schedule a speaker for an organization or group meeting, please call 757-393-8689.

For more information on **“Stay Fire Smart! Don’t Get Burned.”**
visit www.firepreventionweek.org