



During the month of October, the Indian Health Service Head Start Program will distribute weekly Fire Prevention Tips to observe *Fire Safety Month*.

You can make a difference, not only at your Head Start centers, but also in your homes.

Home fires can cause death and injury. In the United States in 2008:

- There were 3,320 civilians that lost their lives as the result of fire.
- There were 16,705 civilian injuries that occurred as the result of fire.
- There were 118 firefighters killed while on duty.
- Fire killed more Americans than all natural disasters combined.
- Eighty four percent of all civilian deaths occurred in homes.
- An estimated 1.5 million fires occurred in 2008.

*Source: National Fire Protection Association Fire Loss in the U.S. 2008 and USFA's Firefighter Fatalities in the U.S. In 2008.*

Many fires are caused by misuse or poor maintenance of electrical devices, careless use of candles, smoking in bed and children playing with matches and lighters. Most potential hazards can be eliminated by following these simple prevention tips in your homes.

- Install and maintain a working smoke alarm on every floor of your home, including the basement, and near all bedrooms. Test all smoke alarms once per month.
- Create a home fire escape plan. Know at least two ways out of every room, if possible, and have a meeting place outside your home. To know your plan, you must practice your plan.
- Teach kids that matches, lighters and candles are not toys. If you suspect that a child may be playing with fire, please check under beds and in closets for these items.
- Keep flammable items like bedding, curtains and clothes at least three feet away from portable heaters or lit candles.
- Never smoke in bed.
- When you cook, never leave cooking food unattended on the stove. Keep all flammable materials, like potholders and towels, away from the cooking area.

Please invite your local firefighters to your Head Start centers to talk to the children about fire safety.

Next week: Step-by-Step Fire Drill