



# play safe! be safe!®



B U L L E T I N



**BEEP! BEEP! BEEP!**



Fire Prevention Week • October 2010

**Smoke Alarms:**  
A sound you can live with

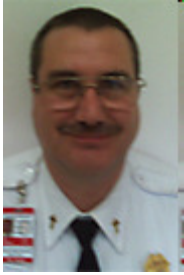


For almost 90 years, the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) has sponsored Fire Prevention Week to raise public awareness of a variety of fire-safety issues. This year's theme is smoke alarms and the educational effort is focused on the necessary steps to update and maintain home smoke alarms.

As usual, the association's web site ([www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org)) has a wealth of educational materials. For preschool teachers, there's a fun activity sheet entitled "Does it make noise?" which teaches children to identify the sound of a smoke alarm. Also at the site are a variety of activity sheets for kids and family members to download.

## **Public Fire Educator Helps to Build a Community Network by Blending Education and Empathy**

*ps! bs!* recently spoke with Paul Trumppore, Public Fire Education Officer for the City of Knoxville Fire Department. Trumppore, working closely with Safe Kids of Knoxville and the Tennessee State Fire Marshal's office, helped to organize a successful Train-the-Trainer workshop that was attended by more than 120 educators. This former county fire fighter joined the Knoxville department in 1998, working "on the truck" for a shift and then presenting fire-safety programs after his shift. He assumed full-time responsibilities for public education in 2002.



*ps! bs!*: Dr. Cole was impressed with the number of representatives from various community organizations, as well as preschool educators, in attendance at the Knoxville workshop.

*Trumpore*: Over the years, I have been active in various teachers' organizations, presenting continuing education programs to preschool educators, so I have built up a good rapport with them. I also liaison with community groups like Red Cross and a variety of social service agencies. In addition, I can't say enough about the work that Knoxville Safe Kids, headed by Susan Cook, has done to bring our community together and focus on a variety of child-safety issues. They were a major sponsor of the workshop and have built an amazing network from which we have all benefitted. If other communities would like to develop this type of network, they could use *play safe! be safe!@* as a tool.

*ps! bs!*: How did you reach the fire community?

*Trumpore*: We had the support of Jeff Huddleston at the State Marshal's office. He sent out a notice to all 700 fire departments about the workshop. That's teamwork.

*ps! bs!*: What has been the impact of the *play safe! be safe!* workshop on Knoxville?

*Trumpore*: It is difficult to quantify how many children and families we keep safe because of the fire safety lessons we teach, but what's important is that as a result of the workshop the *play safe! be safe!* kits are being used in the classroom. We all learned from Dr. Cole's program. I've had courses in child development, but he helped me understand different approaches to teaching preschoolers, and I've adjusted my teaching methods. I was also struck by his explanation of the "expectation of normalcy." We have to continually reinforce fire-safety messages until children and adults do them automatically. His seat belt example really hit home. When seat belt laws were first introduced, people said they would never use them. Now it's second nature for people to buckle up. We want to instill this expectation of normalcy in fire education.

*ps! bs!*: So how do you translate this approach to your fire safety programs?

*Trumpore*: I like to think of my educational approach as teaching a lifestyle of safety. For example, when I visit a business, I initially discuss fire preparedness specific to their office or factory, but that's only part of what I do. I incorporate a discussion of how to be safe in their daily lives and urge them to adopt an attitude of safety. For children, it's the challenge of continually reinforcing fire-safety lessons. For instance, when I teach children and adults about preparing an exit plan, I want them to practice it every month. It's not just something to write down on paper and think about just once. The more you go through the actions, the better prepared you will be in the event of an actual fire.

*ps! bs!*: We heard you also have a second career.

*Trumpore*: I serve as chaplain for the department and I have my own ministry.

*ps! bs!*: How do you blend the two careers?

*Trumpore*: As I see it, they complement each other. They are both my passions. On the one hand, I work to keep kids and adults safe from fire and on the other I help them after they have been through a crisis. In my capacity as chaplain, I go to every working fire in the city, which is something that most fire safety educators do not do on a regular basis. It is challenging because I must comfort people who have suffered great loss, but it also serves to remind me about how important my educational efforts are.

## ASK DR COLE



Dr. Robert Cole lectures extensively and presents numerous *play safe! be safe!*® workshops every year. In this column, he discusses a question that was asked of him at a recent workshop about whether he feels that more resources should be directed to juvenile intervention as opposed to prevention programs.

More than 25 years ago, Fireproof Children and Prevention First Foundation joined with Rochester, N.Y., fire officials to research juvenile fire setting in an effort to come up with a program that would protect the community. It was that research which helped me form my views about where to direct community resources.

It's a misnomer to say that juveniles set fires because they are curious. As I point out in my workshops, children are introduced to fire at a very young age, whether it is a birthday cake, decorative candles at the holidays or a fireplace. Children play with fire because they want to recreate the pretty, warm and inviting candle or match flames, to demonstrate, if only to themselves, their competence, and because they lack appreciation of the dangers. A four year old does not understand how one small match can make a big fire.

The Rochester research revealed that 90% of juveniles do not repeat their fire setting experiments. They appear to learn from their experience, which is why I have directed my energies to preventive programs such as *play safe! be safe!* Public safety is improved if we educate young children to prevent them from ever setting a fire in the first place. We need to instill the basics of fire safety in children at a very young age, continually reinforce these points, and work to change the attitudes of supervising adults about fire safety.

The Rochester research has been compiled along with additional data into a book, which I helped to edit. It's called *Juvenile Firesetting: A Community Guide to Prevention and Intervention*\*.

Of course, I strongly support community programs that work with the 10% of juveniles who habitually play with fire. It is a challenge that must be addressed on several levels, involving parents, schools and social service professionals. Intervention is also discussed in the book.

*\*Copies of Juvenile Firesetting: A Community Guide to Prevention and Intervention, the softcover book written by Dr. Cole, Robert Crandall, Carolyn Kourofsky, Darly Sharp, Susan Blaakman and Elizabeth Cole can be ordered at: <http://www.fireproofchildren.com>.*

## NASFM ADDRESSES CPSC

This past summer Bill Degnan, New Hampshire's State Fire Marshal and Secretary/Treasurer of the National Association of State Fire Marshals (NASFM), addressed the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). He spoke about numerous initiatives supported by NASFM, including restricting the sale of novelty or toy-like lighters. In addition to mentioning that 13 states had already banned sales of these lighters, Degnan noted that the National PTA just passed a resolution calling for a ban as well. He urged: "The CPSC has an opportunity to take true leadership on this issue, as it did with its child-resistant lighter regulations in the 1990s, and implement a national ban on the sale of novelty/toylike lighters that will decisively take these deadly products out of commerce and out of the hands of children – nationwide."