

Washington State Patrol Media Release

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Office of the State Fire Marshal State Fire Marshal Michael Matlick

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State Fire Marshal Urges Residents to “Keep your home safe from fires.”

Olympia, WA 2009 — How many times have you left the house in the morning and wondered, “Did I turn off the stove?” With our busy lives, the safety of our homes and families are sometimes relegated to the back of our minds – an afterthought as we hop in the car to start the day.

State Fire Marshal Mike Matlick wants you to make sure that being fire smart is your top priority during Fire Prevention Week, October 4-10. The theme of this year’s campaign, “Stay Fire Smart! Don’t Get Burned,” focuses on preventing the leading causes of home fires – cooking, heating and electrical equipment, and smoking materials in addition to burn prevention.

According to the latest statistics from the Fire in Washington Annual Report, there were 9,459 reported home structure fires in 2008, resulting in 33 civilian deaths.

While the statistics are daunting, most home fires are easily preventable when we narrow our focus and take personal steps to increase our safety. One way to do this is by proactively combing through each room in your home to find signs of danger and fix them. The Fire marshal is encouraging Washington residents and their families to put their safety first by performing a home hazards inspection during Fire Prevention Week. You can download one from www.firepreventionweek.org.

There are also a number of simple steps that you can put into action to keep your home safe from fire:

- Burns: Bath and shower water should be no higher than 100 degrees.

- Cooking: Stay in the kitchen when you are frying, grilling, or broiling food. If you leave the kitchen for even a short period time, turn off the stove.
- Heating: Keep all things that can burn, such as paper, bedding or furniture, at least 3 feet away from heating equipment.
- Electrical: Replace cracked and damaged electrical cords; use extension cords for temporary wiring only. Consider having additional circuits or receptacles added by a qualified electrician.
- Smoking: If you smoke, smoke outside; wherever you smoke, use deep, sturdy ashtrays.

As members of the fire service, fire prevention is always on our minds. We hope that you use the checklist and home fire prevention tips to put your safety first during Fire Prevention Week, and year-round.

The Office of the State Fire Marshal is a Bureau of the Washington State Patrol, providing fire and life safety services to the citizens of Washington State including inspections of state licensed facilities, plan review of school construction projects, licensing of fire sprinkler contractors and pyrotechnic operators, training Washington State's firefighters, and collecting emergency response data.

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PREVENT FIRES
IT'S YOUR JOB!