

*****Embargoed for Monday, February 14, 10:00 am eastern*****

TALKING POINTS: KIDS FIRE SAFETY

February 2011

Every winter, Americans see an increase in residential fires, as families heat their homes and struggle to stay warm during the winter months. These fires pose serious threats to the health and safety of all members of a family – but put children at even greater risk. And they are largely preventable. One of the most important things we can do to help all families protect their homes and loved ones is to make sure they are aware of the causes of these fires – and simple steps they can take to try to prevent them.

- **As a new report being released today, February 14, by the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s U.S. Fire Administration shows, young children are at a high – and growing risk – of death or injury in a fire.** According to the report, 52 percent of all child fire deaths in 2007, the latest available data, occurred to children under age five – a slight uptick over previous years.
- **This is a percentage that should be going down – but it’s not.** Escaping from a fire can be difficult for children, especially for children under 5, who are generally too young to independently escape from a fire.
- **And fires are a leading cause of death for kids.** In 2007, deaths from fires and burns were the second leading cause of non-transportation accidental deaths for children under the age of 15, after drowning.
- **In addition, the report found that African-American children and children from the poorest homes are especially vulnerable, and that boys face a higher likelihood of dying in a fire than girls.** And in many fire deaths, a smoke detector was not present. In fact, according to this report, from 2006-2008, smoke alarms were reported as not present in almost a quarter – or 23 percent – of residential fires. In 40 percent of these fires, firefighters were unable to determine if a smoke alarm was present.
- **But, there are actions families can take to prevent fires and keep their families safe.** That is why FEMA is teaming up with the National Commission on Children and Disasters and our many partners across the public health, emergency management, fire safety and many other fields to raise awareness of this threat, and share important resources and information that could help protect and save lives.
- **FEMA and our many partners are only a part of the team in this effort, the most valuable part of the team are the families who can take simple steps now to prevent fires and to protect their children.**
- **To help spread the word, today we are launching updated online and social media tools and resources,** so that together, families and communities will have the needed information and resources to take action now to protect their families.

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- These online tools and resources include a website with tips and resources, a widget the links to the website, and a twitter hashtag to promote a dialogue about child fire safety **#kidsfiresafety**.
- **We thank the many organizations and groups in their continued commitment to help to keep families and communities safe from fires.** Any organization wishing to support this call to action, can find information and resources at www.ready.gov.

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