

Fire Safe Cigarettes

The world's first fire-safe cigarette law goes into effect in New York State in July 2004, and legislation has been introduced to implement a similar standard throughout the United States.

A "fire-safe" cigarette is one with a reduced propensity for starting a fire if dropped or left unattended, such as if a smoker falls asleep.

Why is such a standard important? According to the National Fire Protection Association smoking materials, primarily cigarettes, are the number one cause of fatal fires in the United States. Such fires kill approximately 800 Americans each year, including more than 100 children. About 25 percent of residential structure fire deaths are caused by smoking materials.

According to the American Burn Association, factors which reduce propensity for starting a fire include the use of less dense tobacco, paper that is less porous and has no added citrates, and cigarettes with a smaller diameter and a filter tip.

Canadian legislation going into effect by the end of 2004 will make Canada the first nation to pass a cigarette fire safety standard.

The Cigarette Fire Safety Act of 2004 (H.R. 4155), introduced by Reps. Edward J. Markey (D-MA) and Peter King (R-NY), would require the Consumer Product Safety Commission to adopt the New York State cigarette fire safety standard as a national standard. The bill has been endorsed by the National Volunteer Fire Council, National Fire Protection Agency, Congressional Fire Services Institute, National Association of State Fire Marshals, the American Cancer Society, the American Heart Association, the American Lung Association and the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids.

For more information:

National Volunteer Fire Council Legislative Initiatives
<http://www.nvfc.org/leg/hr4155.html>

National Fire Protection Association Fact Sheet "Smoking Material-Related Fires"
www.nfpa.org/Research/NFPAFactSheets/Smoking/Smoking.asp

Health Canada on Fire-Safe Cigarettes
<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hecs-sesc/tobacco/legislation/rip/02.html/>

American Burn Association Fact Sheet on Fire-Safe Cigarettes
<http://www.ameriburn.org/advocacy/fireSafeCig.htm>