

How Smokers Can Reduce Their Risk of Fire

Practical Steps Recommended
by Fire Safety Experts

How Smokers Can Reduce Their Risk of Fire



Overview of the project

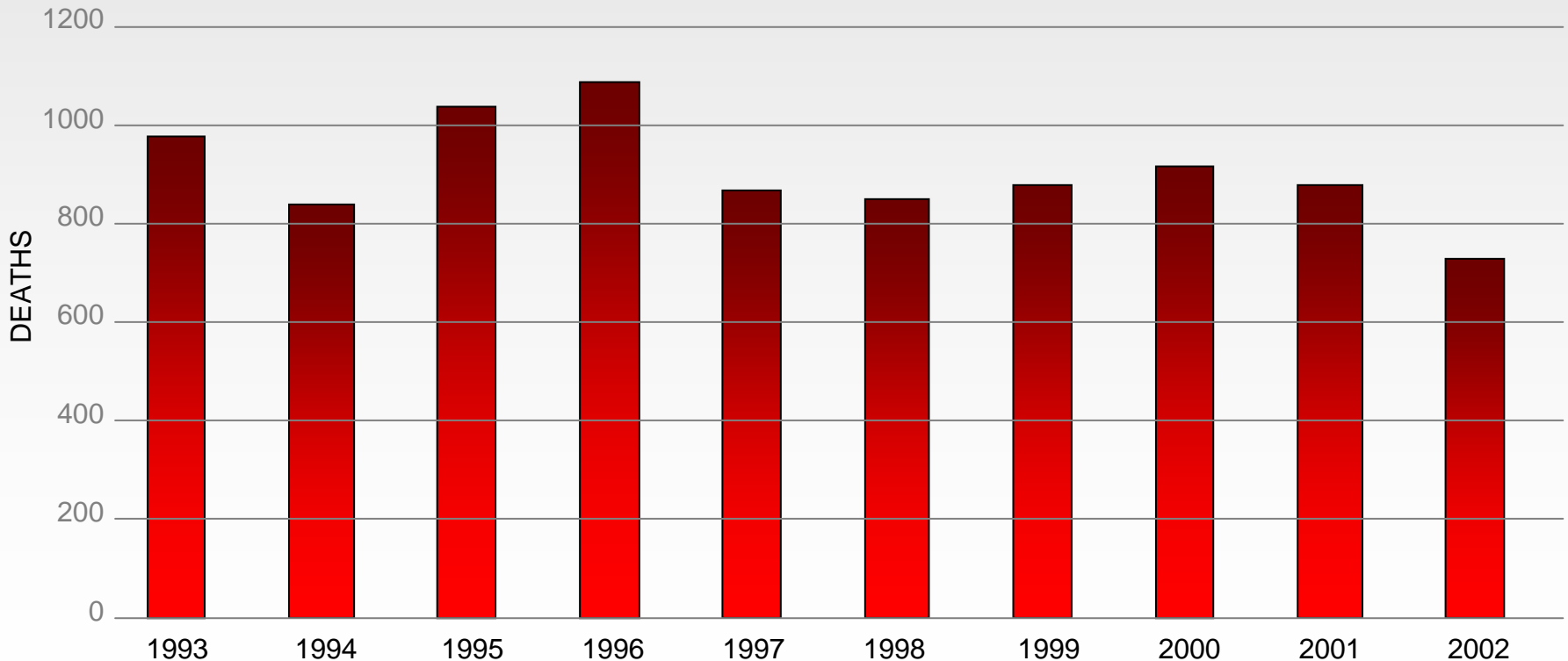
- USFA determines need for new behavioral strategies to reduce cigarette fire deaths
- USFA contracts with NFPA to conduct research
- Sources of data and research
 - Literature review
 - Analysis of fire experience data (NFIRS, FIDO)
 - Smoker characteristics (Behavioral Risk Factor database from US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

Overview of the project

- How the recommended behaviors were developed
 - NFPA Educational Messaging Advisory Committee briefed on research results
 - Committee panels developed candidate behaviors and messages
 - Committee as a whole consolidated recommendations
 - USFA and NFPA staff edited recommendations for conciseness and clarity

Cigarettes are #1 cause of U.S. fatal home fires

900 deaths a year over past decade



Cigarette fires are MUCH more likely to start VERY close to potential victims

- 3 out of 10 sleeping victims of cigarette fires are right next to the fire when it starts compared to 3 out of 100 sleeping victims of all other types of fires
- Once a fire starts this close to a sleeping person, nothing is quick enough to save you with confidence. There is no substitute for prevention.

Smokers have other conditions that complicate their prospects if fire occurs

- Nearly half of fatal smoking-fire victims are impaired by alcohol or other drugs
- Smokers are more likely to have health problems, such as:
 - Asthma
 - Arthritis
 - High blood pressure
 - High cholesterol

Smokers have other conditions that complicate their prospects if fire occurs

- Every additional health problem is another obstacle to safe escape from a cigarette fire

Cigarette fires also kill people who do not smoke

- 1 in 4 fatal victims are not the smokers whose cigarettes started the fire
- These other fatal victims include:
 - Children of smokers
 - Parents of smokers
 - Spouses and partners
 - Neighbors and friends

Fatal cigarette fires usually begin in soft furnishings



Fatal cigarette fires usually begin in soft furnishings



If you smoke,
smoke outdoors

If you smoke, smoke outdoors

There are fewer soft furnishings outdoors and if fire starts on a balcony, patio or deck, walls and doors separate the outdoors from the indoors



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There are fewer soft furnishings outdoors and if fire starts on a balcony, patio or deck, walls and doors separate the outdoors from the indoors



If you smoke, smoke outdoors

For extra safety, dispose of cigarettes in something made for outdoor use



If you smoke, smoke outdoors

- It's not that big a change
 - 1 in 4 people who smoke every day or some days already have rules *at home* that forbid indoor smoking
 - 1 in 2 people who have smoked at least 100 cigarettes in their lives already have rules *at home* that forbid indoor smoking
 - Most smokers report that their workplaces already forbid indoor smoking

Use deep,
sturdy ashtrays

Use deep, sturdy ashtrays

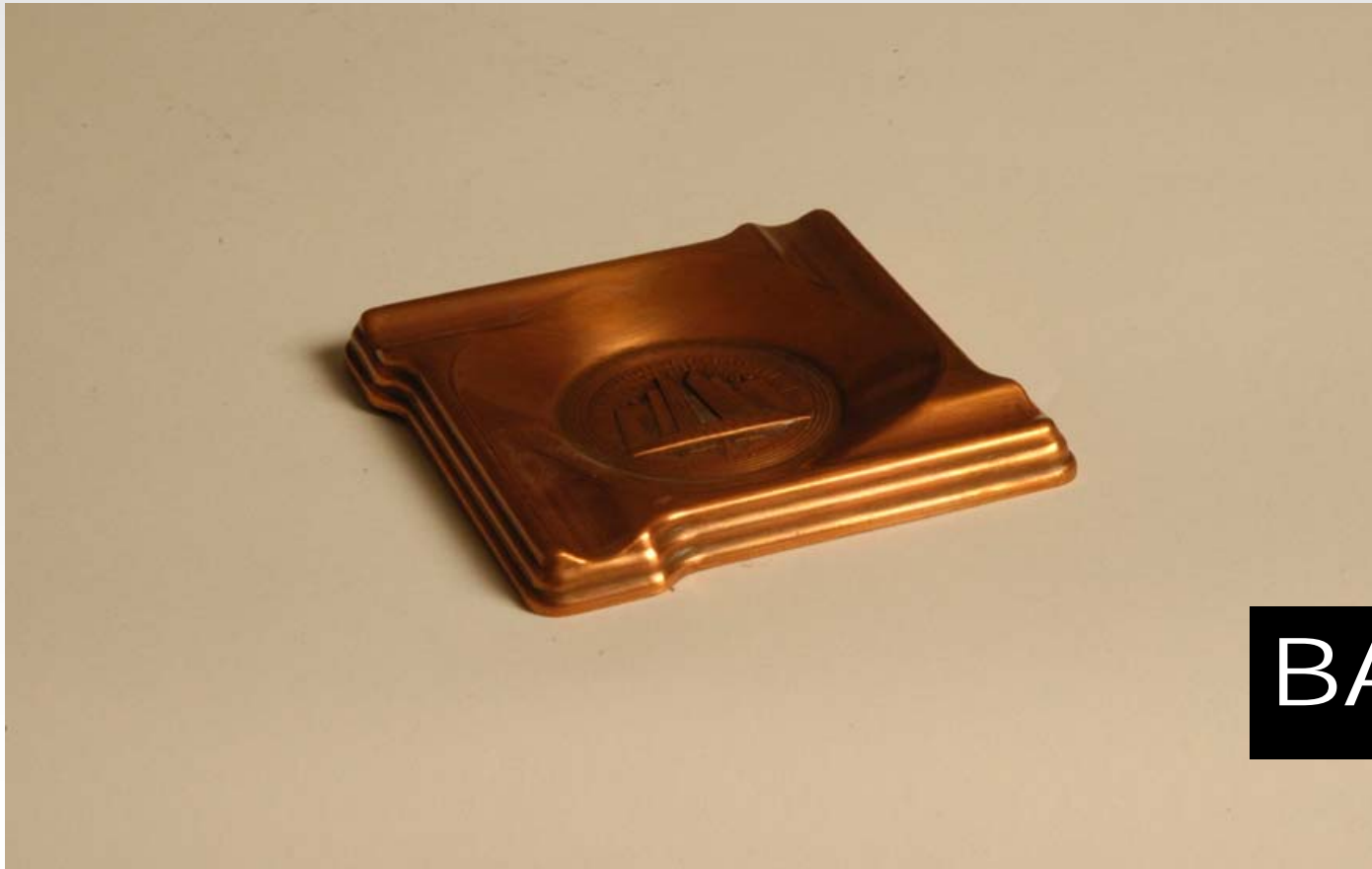
Use wide, deep ashtrays with room for ashes



GOOD

Use deep, sturdy ashtrays

Use wide, deep ashtrays with room for ashes



BAD

Use deep, sturdy ashtrays

Use ashtrays that are hard to tip over or knock over



GOOD



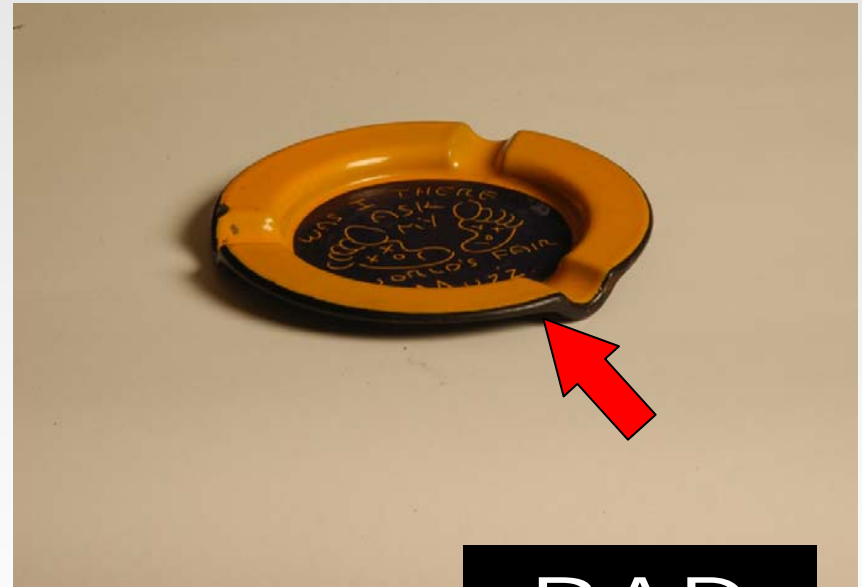
GOOD

Use deep, sturdy ashtrays

Use ashtrays that are hard to tip over or knock over



BAD



BAD

Use deep, sturdy ashtrays

Use ashtrays with sides that slope in or are straight up from the base



GOOD



GOOD

Use deep, sturdy ashtrays

Use ashtrays with sides that slope in or are straight up from the base



BAD



BAD

Use deep, sturdy ashtrays

Use wide ashtrays so cigarettes will fall into ashtray, not out of it



GOOD



BAD

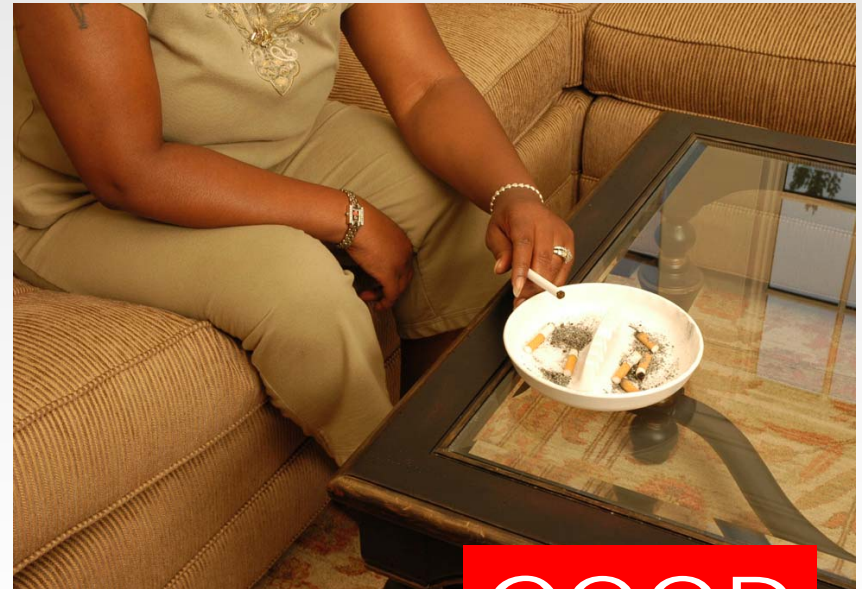
Tips on
where to place
your ashtray

Put ashtrays
near you
but away from
things that burn.

Put ashtrays near you but away from things that burn

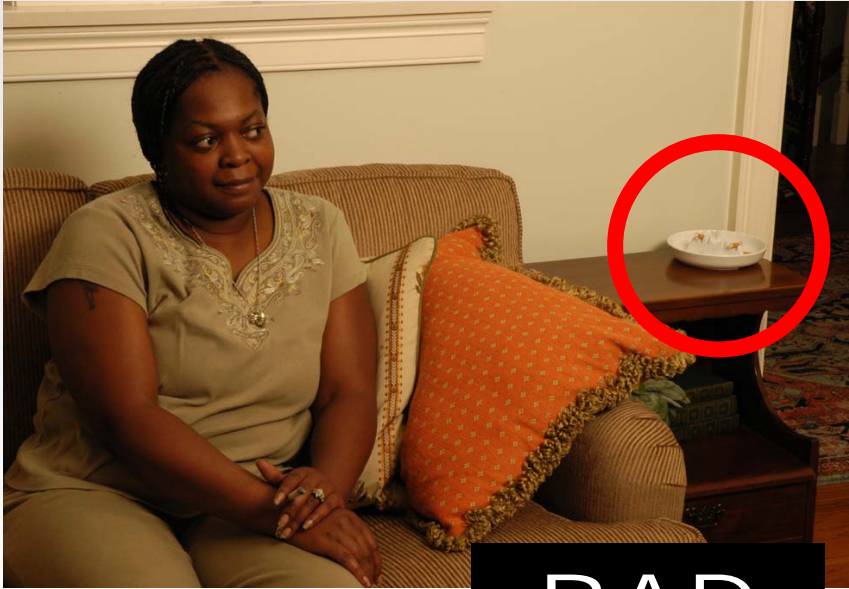


GOOD



GOOD

Put ashtrays near you but away from things that burn



BAD



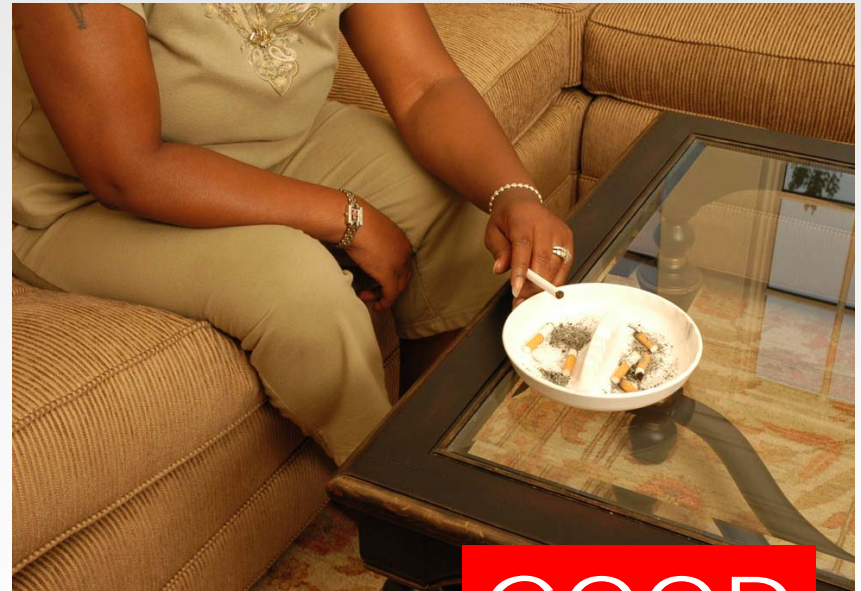
BAD

Keep ashtrays
on a flat,
sturdy base.

Keep ashtrays on a flat, sturdy base



GOOD



GOOD

Keep ashtrays on a flat, sturdy base



BAD



BAD

Make sure
cigarettes
are OUT!

Make sure cigarettes are OUT!

Dowsing with water or sand is the best way to be sure your cigarette is out



GOOD



GOOD

Make sure cigarettes are OUT!

Smothering butts in a "silent butler" works too, if they are left overnight



GOOD



GOOD

Check for
cigarettes that
may have fallen
out of sight

Check for cigarettes that may have fallen out of sight



Check for cigarettes that may have fallen out of sight



NEVER smoke
near oxygen

NEVER smoke near oxygen

- Oxygen makes any fire burn hotter and faster
- If medical oxygen is used in a home...
- *Never* smoke ANYWHERE in that home!!!
- Do not smoke even if oxygen is turned off

If you smoke,
use reduced
ignition strength
cigarettes

If you smoke, choose Reduced Ignition Strength Cigarettes

- These are cigarettes that go out when not actively smoked
- Cigarette burning is interrupted using non-toxic methods - for example, bands of paper that act like speed bumps
- Look for special markings on labels

If you smoke, choose Reduced Ignition Strength Cigarettes

- RISC cigarettes are typically available only where required
- Information is available from past and current legislative initiatives
- Contacts
 - Peter Sparber, Psparber@aol.com
 - John Hall, jhall@nfpa.org

Stay alert to
control your
cigarettes

Stay alert to control your cigarettes

- 3 out of 4 home fires that start because someone fell asleep are cigarette fires
- 3 out of 4 fatal victims of home cigarette fires had some condition of reduced alertness – asleep or impaired by alcohol or other drugs

Summary of advice

How smokers can reduce their fire risk - Summary of advice

1. If you smoke, smoke outdoors
2. Use deep, wide, sturdy ashtrays on a safe, sturdy base
3. Make sure cigarettes are OUT
4. Check for cigarettes that may have fallen out of sight
5. Never smoke in a home where oxygen is used
6. If you smoke, choose Reduced Ignition Strength Cigarettes
7. Stay alert to control your cigarettes