



# HOT • ISSUES

**TO: Fire departments and burn centers**

**RE: Novelty lighters resembling toys**

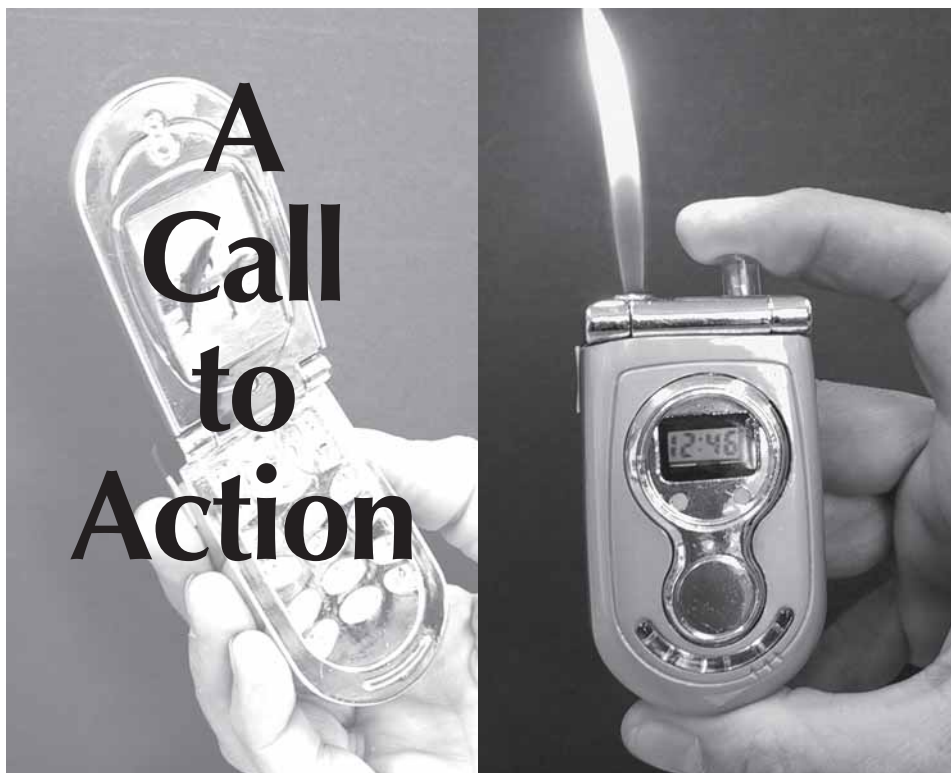
**W**e know there have been fires and burn injuries resulting from children playing with novelty lighters that resemble toys.

We know that children and youths use lighters more frequently than they use matches and that children ages five and under find it easier to light a lighter than to strike a match.

What we don't know, because data about fires and burn injuries caused by novelty lighters have never been collected, is how many child-with-lighter incidents involve novelty lighters.

If you are aware of a fire or burn injury involving a child or youth using a novelty lighter, you can help. We are asking fire departments and burn centers, both in Oregon and nationwide, to collect these data and forward them to the editor of *Hot Issues* at the Office of State Fire Marshal.

The Oregon Burn Center has committed to collecting burn injury data. The Office of State Fire Marshal is asking the Consumer Products Safety Commission to initiate a formal study of



the issue. (See the letter from State Fire Marshal Nancy Orr on page 2.)

While this problem has several dimensions, including caregiver supervision, availability of lighters in the home and access to lighters in the community, it seems especially irresponsible to allow the sale of fire tools that are, by their very design, an attractive danger to children.

## Will you help us?

Data points should include the age and gender of the child or youth, details about the fire incident and/or burn injury, amount of damage caused and a description of the lighter. A photograph of the lighter would be a welcome addition to the collection that is featured in this edition of *Hot Issues*.



# Oregon

Theodore R. Kulongoski, Governor

## Office of Homeland Security

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August 7, 2006

Office of the Chairman  
Nancy Nord  
Consumer Product Safety Commission  
4330 East West Highway  
Bethesda, MD. 20814

*Quality Service First*

RE: Code of Federal Regulations in Title 16, Part 1210 - Novelty Lighters

Dear Ms. Nord:

I would like to voice my concern about the import and sale of novelty lighters that resemble toys. Under the present statute (16 C.F.R. Part 1210), novelty lighters are defined as "lighters that have features that make them attractive to children under five," including "lighters with features entertaining to children, such as visual effects like flashing lights or sound effects like musical notes."

By statute, novelty lighters are subject to the safety standard that requires that at least 85 percent of children in a test group must be unable to operate the lighter. That standard is commendable and has saved thousands of lives. However, children cannot discriminate a toy from a fire tool that looks like a toy. For example, there are lighters on the market that resemble matchbox cars, animals and game pieces. Other lighters look like adult tools in miniature—a cell phone, hammer, bottle opener and felt-tip marker are just a few examples.

In Oregon, a six year old playing with a lighter that looked like a toy dolphin started a fire in which one child died and another was permanently brain damaged. A five year old child using a lighter that looked like a horse started a fire that caused over \$50,000 damage to his home. Another young child playing with a Christmas tree lighter ignited the bedding of her mother's bed, resulting in burn injuries to the mother that required admission to the Oregon Burn Center.

I am fully aware that you need data to determine the magnitude of the problem. Therefore, I am requesting examples of fire incidents involving children using a novelty lighter from the national firesetter intervention community through our newsletter, *Hot Issues*, and from the National Association of State Fire Marshals. However, I am asking CPSC to initiate a formal research study to determine the number of fires set by children using a novelty lighter.

There are no good reasons that lighters should be manufactured to resemble toys. The child-resistant cigarette lighter standard has been highly effective. Surely it is time to take the next step and protect children from lighters that encourage their curiosity, inviting unintentional misuse and placing them and their families at risk.

I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Nancy Orr  
State Fire Marshal



A five year old child, using this horse lighter, started a fire that resulted in over \$50,000 worth of damage to his home.









A young child playing with this Santa lighter ignited his mother's bedding. Burn injuries she sustained in the fire required admission to the Oregon Burn Center.









**Oregon Office of State Fire Marshal**  
Department of State Police  
Juvenile Firesetter Intervention Program  
4760 Portland Road NE  
Salem, OR 97305-1760

## Resources

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### Conference



**Juvenile Firesetting: A Comprehensive Approach  
Prevention, Intervention and Beyond**

**September 28-30, 2006  
Steamboat Grand Hotel  
Steamboat Springs, Colorado**

Hosted by the Children's Hospital Juvenile Firesetter Program, Denver, Colorado, this conference will provide the opportunity to draw upon the expertise of a multidisciplinary faculty covering topics ranging from prevention, assessment, investigation, legal ramifications, intervention and treatment.

Keynote speakers are David Wilcox, Ed.D., Robert Stadolnik, Ed.D., and Sergeant Paul Zipper, Ph.D.

In a poster session, Dr. Linda Nishi-Strattner and Judith Okulitch, M.S., will be presenting the latest research linking child abuse with firesetting behavior.

The conference is designed to develop a networking system of professionals providing services to juvenile firesetters and their families.

Registration fee: \$250. Registration information:  
Kathy Vavrina, (303) 861-6661.

**C**an you tell which is a lighter and which is just a felt-tip marker?



**Would a child who is too young to read be able to tell the difference?**

*Hot Issues* is a quarterly newsletter of information and ideas for those concerned about juvenile firesetting. It is published by the Oregon Office of State Fire Marshal. Please submit news, announcements, articles, suggestions or resources for review to *Hot Issues*. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, this publication is available in alternate formats by calling 503.373.1540, ext. 240. Subscriptions are free of charge.

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