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**Governor Patrick Signs Novelty Lighter Ban**

State Fire Marshal Stephen D. Coan said, "Governor Deval L. Patrick has signed into law a ban on novelty lighters, making Massachusetts the 14th state to do so. When adults cannot tell the difference between these lighters and toys, how can we expect a young child to do so?"

Representative Geraldo Alicea sponsored the bill at the urging of Southbridge Fire Chief Richard Ciesla. "I am proud to see the passage of this bill and I am thankful to my colleagues for approving this prudent piece of legislation," said Representative Alicea. "Prior to filing this bill I had met with a number of local firemen who had brought this issue to my attention and recommended that I file something that would prohibit these dangerous and redundant lighters in the state. I am extremely grateful for their support and hard work on behalf of this bill."

Fire Chief Ciesla said, "The national child resistant lighter standard has gone a long way towards preventing fires started by very young children. This is the next logical step to keep small children and their families safe from fire."

Toy-like or novelty lighters have been responsible for injuries, deaths, and accidents across the nation. Children are attracted to novelty lighters because they look like toys. Many of these lighters look like animals,



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miniature cars, mobile phones, cameras, fishing lures, stacks of coins, markers, and doll accessories. One lighter is nearly identical to the popular rubber ducky bath toy — it even quacks! There are also toy like and novelty lighters that look like tools such as tape measures, drills, hammers, and paint brushes. Ironically, there are even lighters that mimic a Dalmatian donning a fire helmet, a red fire truck, or fire extinguishers. For more information, go to the United States Fire Administration's website on [novelty lighters](#), or to see some in action, see The Idea Bank's [Public Service Announcement](#) on banning novelty lighters.

The law takes effect in 90 days. It bans lighters, which due to the physical or audio features make them appealing or attractive to a child under age 10. There is an exemption for collectible lighters made before 1980, certain disposable lighters with artwork, and for interstate transport of lighters not designed to be sold in Massachusetts.

### **Children Using Fire.**

A child using fire or fire tools is a serious problem in Massachusetts, and across the nation. Juvenile firesetting intervention programs have found that only one in every ten child-set fires comes to the attention of the fire department, so the reported fire incidents is considered the tip of the ice berg.

### **Last Year Children Caused 158 Fires, 2 Civilian Injuries & \$887,306**

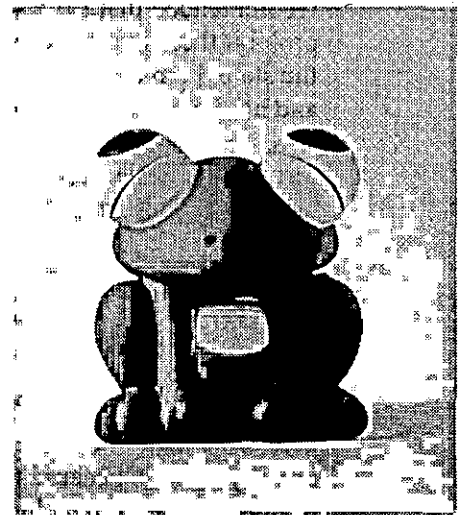
In 2009, children using matches, lighters and other heat sources, caused 158 reported fires, two civilian injuries, eight fire service injuries and an estimated dollar loss of \$887,306.

### **Child-set Fires Caused 4 Deaths in 2008**

In 2008, there were two fatal fires started by juveniles, one in Holyoke and one in Haverhill. These fires took the lives of four people; three children under seven and one disabled adult.

### **Match and Lighter Safety Tips**

- Adults must keep all matches and lighters out of the hands of children. Store them in a high cabinet, preferably a locked one.
- Keep matches and lighters on your person or locked up. Don't leave them in a purse or on a table where children can easily access them when no one's looking.
- Buy child-resistant lighters, but keep in mind they are not child proof.
- Never allow children to play with lighters. Children as young as two years old have been able to operate lighters and start fires with them.
- Teach children not to touch matches and lighters and tell a grown-up when they see them lying around!



When a child does so, praise them and then move the matches and lighters to a secure spot.

**Working Smoke Alarms and Home Escape Plans**

Coan said, "A working smoke alarm is your family's first line of defense in a fire. Coupled with a home escape plan you practice together, they can increase your chances of safely escaping a fire."