

Novelty Lighters

What is the problem?

Toylike lighters are readily available in places like convenience stores, gas stations, hardware stores and some craft stores. They are easily mistaken for toys. Experience has shown that adults and children find them intriguing. Many of them have lights, visual effects and sounds, making them even more attractive to children. Some resemble toys or cartoon characters, such as Gumby or a rubber ducky named Nemo, that are familiar to children. In the hands of a child, toylike lighters can be deadly. Some incidents involving toylike lighters include:


- In South Carolina during 2007, approximately 35% of child-related fires were caused by children using lighters, resulting in two reported deaths.
- A six-year-old in North Carolina sustained second degree burns using a lighter that looked like a cell phone.
- In Oregon, a home was destroyed by a fire set by a child using a lighter that looked like a horse.
- In Maine, a boy mistook a lighter shaped like a baseball bat for a flashlight and received burns to his eyelid.
- In Arkansas, two toddlers died in a fire they started with a lighter that looked like a motorcycle.

Fast facts











- Over 70 million toylike lighters are imported into the United States annually.
- The European Union banned the sale of toylike lighters as of March 2007. Millions more of these lighters will likely be for sale in the U.S. as a result.
- Nationally, over 13,000 home fires are started by youths annually. (Source: NFPA)

What you can do to help?

- Find out the facts about the issue and support prohibiting the sale and distribution of toylike lighters in South Carolina.



Toys? or lighters?



This information brought to you
by a partnership of
National Association of State Fire Marshals
Oregon Office of State Fire Marshal
United States Fire Administration
and the
South Carolina State Fire Marshal's Office