

Safety Fact Sheet

Disposable Cigarette Lighters



What is a disposable cigarette lighter?

A disposable cigarette lighter is a device used for lighting cigarettes. It is designed to be re-filled or thrown away when it is empty of lighter fuel.¹

How may children be injured when using a disposable cigarette lighter?

Burns

- Children may get burnt if they set an object alight using the cigarette lighter. Children often do not understand that a small flame can grow into a dangerous fire very quickly.
- The lit end of a cigarette can burn the skin if touched.

How common are these injuries?

From 1996–2005, 235 children under five years of age in NSW, died under circumstances where inadequate supervision was a possible factor in their death. The circumstances surrounding 10 of these deaths in fire incidents included: being left in the care of other children while the parent/s went out for the evening; entering a burning residence without the supervisor's knowledge; and playing unsupervised with lighters or matches.²

Is there a Law or an Australian Standard for disposable cigarette lighters?

The Fair Trading Regulation 2007 states that all disposable, novelty and certain refillable lighters sold must meet performance and labelling requirements. They must have a device, eg a button, release catch or metal guard which makes it difficult for small children to operate the lighter. Lighters must also be permanently marked;

**WARNING - KEEP AWAY FROM CHILDREN or
WARNING - KEEP OUT OF REACH OF CHILDREN³**

Remember:

- Always keep lighters and matches away from children.
- If there are smokers in your home, make sure that cigarettes, matches and ashtrays are kept out of children's reach.
- Do not ask your child to get lighters or matches for you.
- Take care when smoking cigarettes around young children.
- Do not hold young children when you are smoking.
- Only buy lighters with a child-resistant mechanism and make sure they have a warning label regarding children.
- Remember that child-resistant lighters are NOT child-proof.

¹ Office of Consumer and Business Affairs, South Australia (2004). *Disposable Cigarette Lighters*. Retrieved May 5, 2006 from the World Wide Web:

<http://www.ocba.sa.gov.au/productsafety/standards/disposable.html>

² NSW Child Death Review Team (2008) *Trends in Child Deaths in New South Wales 1996–2005* NSW Commission for Children and Young People: Sydney.

³ www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au