

Fire & Life Safety

Provincial Public Education Position Paper

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No. 07

Issue: What should children be taught to do when they find matches and/or lighters?

Position:

If a child under the age of 7 years (Grade 1) finds matches and/or lighters, the child should be taught to TELL a grown-up. They should not touch matches and/or lighters. A child age 7 years or older (Grade 2) can be taught to GIVE matches and/or lighters to a grown-up they know.

Rationale:

Children playing with matches and/or lighters is a leading cause of fire deaths for children five years and younger. The message is intended to ensure that children under the age of 7 years (Grade 1) have no access to play with matches and/or lighters.

Older children are able to take on the responsibility of giving matches and/or lighters to a grown-up they know. Matches and lighters are tools for adults not toys for children. With adult supervision, older children may be taught how to use matches and lighters safely and appropriately.

Caregivers play a key role in supporting this fire safety behaviour. Adults should positively reinforce children who TELL and/or GIVE (depending on their age) matches and lighters to them, and must respond by safely storing the matches and/or lighters out of sight and out of reach of children. Adults and other caregivers should keep matches and lighters out of sight and out of reach of children at all times.

Purpose of Public Education Position Papers:

In order to provide for the consistent delivery of fire and life safety education in the Province of British Columbia, the BC Public Fire & Life Safety Education Advisory Committee through the Public Education Strategic Plan has identified the need for the development of Public Education Position Papers. While it is not mandatory for individual agencies who deliver fire and life safety educational programs to follow these position papers, it is hoped that these positions will be supported throughout British Columbia, in order to achieve consistency in the delivery of fire and life safety education.

Fire & Life Safety Public Education Position Papers are published by the Office of the Fire Commissioner in conjunction with the BC Public Fire & Life Safety Education Advisory Committee.

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