

Prevent Juvenile Arson

- In the state of Minnesota a child as young as 10-years-old who lights a fire and damages property may be charged with arson.
- Juvenile arson accounts for nearly 40% of the total arson arrests in Minnesota.
- Statistics show that of the children killed in fires, more than 50% of those children started the fires themselves.

If you know a child at risk:
call the Youth Firesetting
Helpline

651-201-7220



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For School Staff



Understand and Prevent Youth Firesetting



Youth Firesetting Helpline

651-201-7220



Schools Can Help

Any student who brings to school ignition devices, such as matches, lighters or fuel such as gasoline needs help. By calling the toll-free help line, school staff can initiate the intervention process for a student. The help line is monitored regularly.

The child's family contact information will be forwarded to the local youth-firesetting intervention specialist so the child and family can receive life-saving information and education. There are programs available throughout Minnesota designed to change the behavior of youth at risk.

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Youth Firesetting

Children are naturally curious about fire. When this curiosity becomes experimental it is dangerous ~ even deadly ~ not only to the child and those in the area, but also to firefighters and emergency personnel who respond to the scene.

Children who bring ignition devices to or start fires in school need help. The Minnesota Youth Fire Intervention Team (YFIT) is ready to offer intervention services.

Appropriate intervention requires finding the root of the problem. YFIT will meet with the family and conduct a risk assessment then make intervention recommendations. For children with a low risk, fire science education is often adequate. Children at a higher risk may need the help of social services or mental health professionals to get to the root of the problem. Directing them to helpful services can literally save their lives.

Juvenile Arson

Children as young as 10 years old may be charged with arson. 10-year-olds set more fires in Minnesota than any other juvenile age. The goal is to help a child who is using fire with appropriate intervention. Punishment and scare tactics are not appropriate intervention strategies and do not change the behavior.

In 2015 nearly 400 cases of youth set fires were reported in Minnesota. Some of these fires occurred in school. There are others that may not be reported.

Let's find these kids before they get in trouble! Be aware of any child who smells like gasoline. Evidence of fires started in bathrooms can lead to identifying a child. Also, watch for kids in possession of lighters, and call the help line.

Appropriate intervention is successful in stopping firesetting behavior.

The Minnesota State Fire Marshal Division sponsors the youth firesetting helpline for anyone involved with children at risk of firesetting behavior ~ parents, teachers, school staff, social services, law enforcement & others.

