



Over 90% of all Fireplaces Pose a Hazard to Young Children

There are way too many burns and injuries around a fireplace. Even the glass in front of gas-burning fireplaces can be hotter than 400° F, and wood burning stoves get even hotter, enough for an instantaneous burn for a child. A little common sense is all that is necessary for keeping your child safe.

Some fireplace hazards include:

- ◆ **Glass** – The glass in front of fireplaces can easily exceed 400° F and a wood-burning stove can get much hotter than that, which can easily burn a child's hand.
- ◆ **Fireplace Tools** – These can pose a hazard to a child, especially the poker rod.
- ◆ **Ash** – The remnants from a wood fire can be easily inhaled and can cause various respiratory problems.
- ◆ **Materials In Gas Burning Fireplaces** – It is common to see fiberglass below the artificial logs to give a more rustic scene for the fire. This can be picked up by a child and put in their mouth, potentially irritating the mouth and digestive track.
- ◆ **Exposed Pilot Lights** – Many gas fireplaces have pilot lights that are always on, potentially creating a burn hazard.
- ◆ **Hearth Risks** – Hearths are made of hard materials such as brick, stone or tile. These can injure the child by lacerations or if they hit the hearth at their mouth level, potentially breaking out teeth.

Some solutions are:

- ◆ **Barriers In Front Of Fireplaces** – If a fireplace is going to be used when a young child is around, there should be a barrier mounted securely in front of the fire. This should be situated such that a child is always at least 18" away from the fireplaces. Do not attempt to use free-standing fireplace screens as these can be easily moved or pulled over. Also, put the fireplace tools behind the barrier, or put the tools where your child cannot find them.
- ◆ **Don't Use Fireplace When Child Is Awake** – Or better yet, don't even use it. By turning off the pilot, you will save money.
- ◆ **Cleaning After Wood Burning Fires** – As soon as it is safe to remove the remnants of a wood fire, you should clean up as to prevent the child from getting to the ashes.
- ◆ **Prevent Falls On To The Hearth** – You can use foam for the hearth, but you may find that you are constantly putting the foam back in place. Or you can use upholstered fireplace pads that are custom made for your home. Lastly, you can use the same sort of barrier as described above in keeping children away from the hearth.

The unfortunate thing of this is that people just don't think it will happen to their child. By carelessness or not having the right protection in place, it is a recipe for disaster for young children. Preventing a child from getting near a fireplace is the best remedy.

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