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Press Release

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2009
Arson Awareness Week
May 3 - 9



(ANCHORAGE, Alaska) — Across the nation this week, fire officials are speaking out against Arson. The Alaska Department of Public Safety is joining in the educational push. According to the National Fire Protection Association, in 2005, an estimated 323,900 intentionally set fires were reported to U.S. fire departments. These fires resulted in 490 civilian fire deaths, three firefighter deaths, 1,500 civilian fire injuries and 7,600 firefighter injuries. These fires caused \$1.102 billion in direct property damage.

In Alaska during 2005, six deaths were attributed to intentionally set fires. Last year, there were two people in Alaska killed by intentionally set fires.

The theme for the 2009 Arson Awareness Week is Arson for Profit. Nationwide, community officials are reporting a sharp increase of vehicle owners who are suspected of reporting their vehicle stolen and then destroying their vehicle by setting it on fire. There has also been an increase of vehicle arson arrests.



Arsons are often times done for financial reasons, to include collecting insurance money, liquidating property, dissolving businesses and concealing losses.

Arson for profit affects everyone through the loss of life, increased insurance premiums and related expenses for the fire and law enforcement professionals. It can be curtailed by a collaborative effort and cooperation of fire investigators, law enforcement, insurance professionals and the legal system.

Listed below are some tips to reduce the chances that you may become a victim of arson:

- Secure and monitor unoccupied and abandoned buildings.
- Remove trash, debris and other combustible materials from the front and back of your home and/or business.
- Lock your doors and windows.
- Report suspicious people and activity to law enforcement officials.
- Support local Neighborhood Watch programs.
- Illuminate the exterior of your home as well as the entrances.
- Remove garbage cans daily during nonschool hours. (Garbage is sometimes used as an ignition source for arson fires.)
- Keep dumpsters at least 10 feet away from buildings and roof overhangs. Make sure all discarded materials are placed inside the containers and padlocked after during nonschool hours.
- Lock and secure your vehicles.

If you are interested in obtaining additional information regarding the 2009 Arson Awareness Week or Arson for profit below is a list of helpful links:

Fire and Life Safety

<http://www.dps.state.ak.us/FIRE/>

Insurance Information Institute

<http://www.iii.org>

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives

<http://www.atf.gov>

Insurance Research Council

<http://www.ircweb.org>

Coalition against Insurance Fraud

<http://www.insurancefraud.org>

InterFire

<http://www.interfire.org>

Federal Bureau of Investigation's Uniform Crime Reporting

<http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/ucr.htm>

National Volunteer Fire Council

<http://www.nvfc.org>

International Association of Arson Investigators

<http://www.firearson.com>

United States Fire Administration

<http://www.usfa.dhs.gov>

Insurance Committee for Arson Control

<http://www.arsoncontrol.org>