

FIRE SAFETY



commonwealth
>> autism



A safety guide for people with autism and other developmental disabilities



The National Fire Protection Association recommends creating a storybook to help individuals with special needs understand what fire is and why it can be dangerous. Utilizing photos of their environment and family/caregivers, the storybook could be a great tool to teach safety rules (related to candles, the stove/oven, and the fireplace), escape plans, and how to respond to firefighters.



Purchase talking fire alarms. Studies have shown that fewer than half of children ages 6-15 wake up to a traditional alarm, and are more likely to wake to the sound of a familiar voice such as their parent. The Kidsmart Vocal Smoke Detector can be used in addition to a traditional smoke and fire alarm.



Teach and practice “get low and go”. Show pictures of what that means and how that behavior can help avoid breathing deadly smoke while exiting a burning structure. Include an agreed upon meeting place outside the home. Create and use visual aids above doors to highlight the escape route.



It could be frightening to see firefighters in full gear entering your smoke-filled home! Visit your local fire department to learn about fire extinguishers, see firefighters in full gear, and experience hearing sirens and touching fire trucks. This would also be a good time to share an emergency profile sheet, exchange information and answer any questions specific to your loved one’s needs.



If your loved one may not be able to speak or call out for help, keep whistles or bells around the house (inside and outside the home). Teach and practice where the whistles or bells are located and how to use them.

For more resources and references, including model social narratives and emergency planning kits, go to our website

www.autismva.org