

DEVAL L. PATRICK  
GOVERNOR

TIMOTHY P. MURRAY  
LT. GOVERNOR

MARY ELIZABETH HEFFERNAN  
SECRETARY

*The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Executive Office of Public Safety and Security  
Department of Fire Services*

*P.O. Box 1025 ~State Road*

*Stow, Massachusetts 01775*

*(978) 567-3100 Fax: (978) 567-3121*

*www.mass.gov/dfs*



STEPHEN D. COAN  
STATE FIRE MARSHAL

For Immediate Release: November 13, 2010  
Contact: Chief Geoffrey Neagle, Boxborough Fire Dept.  
Phone: 978-263-7546

**Boxborough Chief Neagle Announces New Novelty Lighter Ban**

Boxborough Fire Chief Geoffrey Neagle and State Fire Marshal Stephen D. Coan are alerting the public and retailers that the new ban on novelty lighters took effect in Massachusetts this week. Governor Patrick signed legislation passed this summer that prohibits the sale of lighters, which due to their physical or audio features make them appealing or attractive to a child under age 10. Coan said, "Massachusetts is the 14th state to ban these lighters that by their very nature are attractive to children." Chief Neagle said, "When adults cannot tell the difference between these lighters and toys, how can we expect a young child to do so?"



Toy-like or novelty lighters have been responsible for injuries, deaths, and accidents across the nation. Children are attracted to novelty lighters because they look like toys. Many of these lighters look like animals, miniature cars, mobile phones, cameras, fishing lures, stacks of coins, markers, and doll accessories. One lighter is nearly identical to the popular rubber ducky bath toy — it even quacks! There are also toy-like and novelty lighters that look like tools such as tape measures, drills, hammers, and paintbrushes. Ironically, there are even lighters that mimic a Dalmatian donning a fire helmet, a red fire truck, or fire extinguishers.

**Alerting Retailers**

"As part of our outreach to publicize this new law, we are distributing posters to retailers," said Chief Neagle, "Even though suppliers may still offer these items for sale to retailers, stores must not offer for sale, sell, exchange, give away, or stock them in a Massachusetts establishment," headed Chief Neagle. For questions, please contact the Boxborough Fire Prevention Office at 978-263-7546 or the Office of the State Fire Marshal at (978) 567-3712.

*Administrative Services • Division of Fire Safety  
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The law contains an exemption for collectible lighters made before 1980, certain disposable lighters with artwork, and for interstate transport of lighters not designed to be sold in Massachusetts.

### **Children Using Fire**

Coan said, “The national child resistant lighter standard has gone a long way towards preventing fires started by very young children. This is the next logical step to keep small children and their families safe from fire.” A child using fire or fire tools is a serious problem in Massachusetts, and across the nation. Juvenile firesetting intervention programs have found that only one in every ten child-set fires comes to the attention of the fire department, so the reported fire incidents are considered the tip of the ice berg.

### **Last Year Children Caused 158 Fires**

In 2009, children using matches, lighters and other heat sources, caused 158 reported fires, two civilian injuries, eight fire service injuries and an estimated dollar loss of \$887,306.

### **Child-set Fires Caused 4 Deaths in 2008**

In 2008, there were two fatal fires started by juveniles, one in Holyoke and one in Haverhill. These fires took the lives of four people: three children under seven and one disabled adult.

### **Match and Lighter Safety Tips**

- Adults must keep all matches and lighters out of the hands of children. Store them in a high cabinet, preferably a locked one.
- Keep matches and lighters on your person or locked up. Don't leave them in a purse or on a table where children can easily access them when no one's looking.
- Buy child-resistant lighters, but keep in mind they are not child proof.
- Never allow children to play with lighters. Children as young as two years old have been able to operate lighters and start fires with them.
- Teach children not to touch matches and lighters and tell a grown-up when they see them lying around. When a child does so, praise them and then move the matches and lighters to a secure spot.

For more information, go to the United States Fire Administration's website on [novelty lighters](#), or to see some in action, see The Idea Bank's [Public Service Announcement](#) on banning novelty lighters.

### **Working Smoke Alarms and Home Escape Plans**

Neagle said, “A working smoke alarm is your family's first line of defense in a fire. Coupled with a home escape plan you practice together, they can increase your chances of safely escaping a fire.”



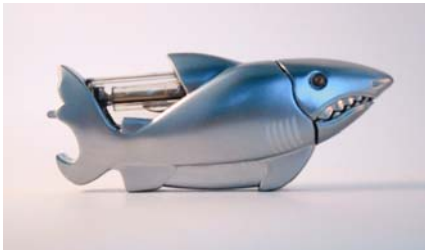
# Novelty Lighters: Important Retailer Information



A message from the Department of Fire Services  
and State Fire Marshal, Stephen D. Coan

On August 9, 2010, Governor Patrick signed into law "An Act Prohibiting the Use of Novelty Lighters." This law becomes effective November 7, 2010. On or after that date, this new law prohibits the manufacture, sale, exchange, storage or transportation of any novelty lighter throughout the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. **Violations of the statute are punishable by fines not less than \$500 nor more than \$1,000 or by imprisonment for not more than one year, or both.** See copy of law attached.

Whether being confused for toys or played with for their likeness to toys, lighters such as those below, have been the cause of many tragic fires. Below are examples of various types of available novelty lighters. This is NOT all-inclusive:



Beware! Lighters of this nature are not yet illegal nationwide. Even though your supplier may still offer these items for sale, you **MUST not offer for sale, sell, exchange, give away, or stock them in your establishment.** Questions? Contact the State Fire Marshal's Office at **(978) 567-3712.**