

Lesson Plan Summary

Curriculum: Alcohol, Drugs and Smoking. . .A Deadly Combination

Module Summary:

Length: 45 **Method:** Lecture **Evaluation:** None

References: USFA, South Carolina Fire Incident Reporting System

Equipment and Facilities: Computer, Data Video Projector

Visual Aids: PowerPoint™ Presentation: Alcohol, Drugs and Smoking. . .A Deadly Combination

Instructor Preparation: 1 hour

Additional Instructors: None

Module Objectives:

Participants will understand the increased fire death risks among people who abuse alcohol and other drugs, and an even greater risk results when these activities are combined with careless smoking.

Participants will learn behaviors to increase chances of surviving a fire by installing and maintaining smoke alarms, planning and practicing escape plans, and using caution while cooking and smoking.

- Curriculum reaching kindergarten through fifth grade students throughout South Carolina, reaches almost 300,000 students
- Smoke alarm distribution projects to equip high-risk audiences with free smoke alarms. Over 500,000 smoke alarms have been installed in homes across our state

We have come to realize, and statistics prove, that fire education works to reduce fire fatalities.

As we continue to decrease fire fatalities in the targeted age groups of the young and old, we are seeing a rise however, in fire fatalities among the adult population between the ages of 21 – 60. In a sampling of these incidences, blood alcohol levels are elevated suggesting a strong correlation between intoxication and the ability to detect and escape from a fire.

In South Carolina, more than a third of adult fire fatalities involve alcohol and other drugs, and in the United States 40% of residential fire fatalities involve alcohol or other drugs.

In one study, 7 out of 48 fire fatalities in children under 18 occurred in homes where one of the surviving adults was judged to have been impaired by alcohol or other drugs. So, not only are people putting themselves at greater risk, they also put their family members at greater risk.

Smoking combined with alcohol use creates an even greater risk for fire injuries and deaths. Smokers are more often heavier drinkers than non-smokers, and a large percent of all alcohol-impaired fire deaths were the result of fires caused by careless smoking.

SLIDE 4

SLIDE 5

What You Can Do To Protect Your Home, your Family and Loved Ones.

1. Install smoke alarms. Death from fire is two to three times more likely in a home that doesn't have a working smoke alarm. Almost 50% of all home fires and 60% of home fire deaths occur in the 7 % of homes with no smoke alarms.
 - For maximum protection, smoke alarms should be installed in every room and on every level of your home. For minimal protection, install smoke alarms between living and sleeping rooms and on every level. Always follow manufacturers' guidelines for installation or contact your fire department for assistance
 - Make sure your alarms work - If they don't work, they can't serve as an early warning device to alert you of a potential problem.
 - Test your alarm once a month. If it doesn't operate, replace the battery. Smoke alarms have an approximate ten-year life span, and may need to be replaced if unit is several years old.

2. Exit Drills in the Home (E.D.I.T.H) Plans:

Once notified by your smoke alarm that there is a problem, people need to be prepared for getting out and staying out!

Develop a thorough fire escape plan and practice it at least twice a year. The more you practice your escape, the less likely you are to panic in a "real" fire situation.

SLIDE 6

SLIDE 7

SLIDE 8

Your plan should include:

- Identify two ways out of every room.
- Establish a meeting place outside and make sure everyone knows where to meet. Have a method of identifying the fire department from outside of your home.
- Teach everyone in your household that once they are out, they must stay out. Never go back inside.
- Keep in mind that smoke and toxic gas produced from the fire rise to the ceiling. The closer to the floor you are, the cooler and cleaner the air.

SLIDE 9

3. Practice Kitchen/Cooking Safety

If you are drinking, be especially careful around materials that can cause fires. Cooking-related incidents are the most common cause of residential fires in South Carolina, so try to limit drinking before and during cooking. Alcohol is known to diminish motor coordination and balance, as well as impair perception and judgment. Alcohol makes a person less aware of their surroundings – making it easier to forget that pot on the stove.

SLIDE 10

SLIDE 11

- Never leave the stove unattended while cooking. Someone should be in the kitchen at all times when something is cooking particularly when using grease or oil.
- Appliances should be turned off promptly after use.

SLIDE 12

- Wear tight fitting clothing while cooking, and keep towels, potholders and other flammable materials away from the stove.
- If food or grease catches fire, smother the flames by sliding a lid over the pan and turning the unit off. Do not try to extinguish grease fires with water.
- Make sure the stove is kept clean and free of grease buildup.
- Cooking oil should be heated slowly to prevent fires from starting easily.
- Turn pot handles away from the front of the stove so they cannot be knocked over or pulled off.
- Don't use small pans on large burners. The flames or heat comes up and around them and ignites things – or you!
- Never use the range or oven to heat your home.
- Microwave ovens stay cool, but what is in them can get very hot. Remove lids with caution to prevent steam burns. If anything catches fire inside the microwave, Leave the door shut and turn the microwave off. Opening the door will only add fuel to the fire by providing more oxygen.
- Double-check the kitchen before you go to bed. Are the stove and oven turned off?

SLIDE 13

Some types of drug use and drug paraphernalia create an additional danger of fire. Freebasing or “cooking” cocaine, smoking crack cocaine with a high-powered lighter, and manufacturing drugs like methamphetamine all create high-risk situations for fires. Do not allow this type of illegal drug use in your home – it puts lives and property at risk.

4. Where there is smoke, there’s fire.

Careless smoking is a leading cause of fire fatalities in South Carolina each year.

- The leading cause of smoking-related residential fires in the United States is abandoned or carelessly disposed cigarettes, pipes, cigars, and matches.
- Smoking while drinking is an especially dangerous combination. Most people are aware that smoking is bad for the health of the smoker and for the health of people around the smoker, but one of the dangers that people forget about is fire.
- In smoking related fires, the leading types of material first ignited are mattresses, bedding and upholstered furniture. Too often, someone falls asleep while still holding a lit cigarette.
- Never smoke in bed or allow anyone else in your home to smoke in bed! Smoking in bed causes more fire deaths than any other activity. The lit end of a cigarette can burn at a temperature above 1,000 degrees, easily igniting flammable bedding materials.

SLIDE 14

SLIDE 15

- Provide a deep ashtray with a solid base if you allow smoking in your home.
- Douse cigarettes or ashtray contents with water before disposing of them in the trash.
- Don't prop an ashtray on the arm of a chair or anywhere that it can be knocked over easily, and never leave burning cigarettes unattended.
- Be especially careful if alcohol or other drugs are being used. Alcohol and other drugs can cause you to fall asleep or to be careless while smoking and can also make you less able to detect fires, or to escape if one does occur.

In Review:

- Install and Maintain Smoke Alarms
- Prepare and Practice E.D.I.T.H
- Be Aware of Cooking/Kitchen Hazards and Safety Practices
- Use Caution while smoking materials are present.

SLIDE 16

VIDEO