Smoking-related fires: Talking points

You can use these talking points in preparation for a media interview. More media interview tips are available in our Pocket Media Guide.

- Never smoke while using or near medical oxygen.
- If you smoke, smoke outside.
- Make sure cigarettes are fully extinguished in a deep ashtray filled with sand or water.
- Don’t put out smoking materials in potted plants or mulch. These items often contain peat moss, which can smolder and burn for long periods of time.
- It is not safe to smoke while under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- These fires are happening to people in our most vulnerable populations.
- Careless smoking is historically the leading cause of fatal fires in Minnesota. The same holds true in our city. **We have had XX smoking-related fire deaths this year OR We have had XX smoking-related fire deaths in the past five years.**
- Many people who die in smoking-related fires are under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Most fires started by cigarettes ignite in living rooms, family rooms, dens or bedrooms.
- We understand that it is hard to quit smoking. However, it is not hard to smoke outside. It is not hard to extinguish your cigarettes in a container filled with sand or water.
- 94 people died in smoking-related fires in Minnesota from 2009 through 2019.
  - 81 percent were over age 50
  - 53 were men, 41 were women
  - Most frequently reported areas of origin: Living room and bedroom
  - Where?
    - Seven-county metro area: 35
    - Greater Minnesota: 59
  - 17 percent involved smokers using medical oxygen