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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Top Fire Safety Tips for Home and Business**

*The Professional Insurance Agents of Wisconsin offer the following fire safety tips.*

MADISON, Wisconsin (September 24, 2004) – Home and business fires result in thousands of deaths and billions of dollars in damages annually. Here are some basic steps that can be taken to protect families and businesses from fire.

#### **Top Five Fire Safety Tips for Home**

According to the National Safety Council, over 3,300 people die every year in house fires and tens of thousands more are seriously injured. These tips will help construct the best defense – fire prevention.

- Install smoke detectors on every level of your house, especially outside sleeping areas. Test smoke detectors once a month and change the batteries twice a year. (Many people do this when they change the clocks in the Spring and Fall.) Make sure children know the sound of the fire alarm (and what to do if it goes off).
- Keep a fire extinguisher in the kitchen, near the furnace or other areas fires are likely to start. (Extinguishers should be in the general areas mentioned above, not directly next to a stove or furnace due to the fact that fire would consume the extinguisher before it could be reached for use.) Make sure able family members know how to use them.
- Keep matches, lighters and candles out of the reach of children. Make sure all fires (candles, cigarettes, etc.) are properly extinguished.
- Make sure electrical systems are not over taxed and that wires are not worn or exposed.

- Have an escape plan and a designated meeting place outside and practice that escape plan periodically. Make sure all children are familiar with crawling underneath the smoke and understand the stop, drop and roll procedure.

For more fire safety tips for your home, check out these web sites: [www.usfa.fema.gov](http://www.usfa.fema.gov), [www.firesafety.gov](http://www.firesafety.gov), [www.nsc.org](http://www.nsc.org), [www.nfpa.org/sparky](http://www.nfpa.org/sparky).

### **Top Five Fire Safety Tips for Businesses**

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), reports that workplace fires and explosions kill over 200 and injure more than 5,000 workers every year. In addition, workplace fires take personal and financial tolls, costing businesses billions of dollars and putting thousands out of work.

- Make sure all of your fire prevention, notification and extinguishing equipment is in working order. At minimum, businesses should have smoke alarms and fire extinguishers.
- Mount fire extinguishers in areas that have high fire risk. Make sure employees know how to operate the extinguishers. Fire alarms should be easy to access and activate. Employees should know where fire alarms are located and how to use them.
- Consider installing an overhead sprinkler system. These systems detect fires, sound an alarm and send water to the fire and heat.
- Make sure emergency fire exits are unblocked, unlocked and well marked. Employees should know where the two closest exits are to their work area.
- Develop a fire emergency and evacuation plan and hold sessions to inform employees of the proper procedures in case of a fire.

For more fire safety tips for businesses, check out these web sites: [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov), [www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org), [www.usfa.fema.gov](http://www.usfa.fema.gov), [www.firesafety.gov](http://www.firesafety.gov).

The PIA of Wisconsin represents over 600 independent insurance agencies across the state. Independent insurance agents offer “Choices” in insurance coverage, delivering better coverage at a better price than agents representing single insurance companies. For more information about fire safety or to locate a PIA member near you, look for the PIA logo or go to [www.PIAW.org](http://www.PIAW.org).