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*Last updated: July 1, 2009 8:30 a.m.*

## Smokers grumbling as fire-safe law begins

**Michael Zennie**  
The Journal Gazette

Last year, cigarettes and other smoking material started 31 fires in Fort Wayne, including the April 2008 blaze that claimed the lives of a 23-year-old woman and her two children, according to Fort Wayne firefighters.

Nationwide, lit cigarettes were blamed for causing more fatal house fires than any other source, killing 700 to 900 people every year, according to the Indiana Department of Homeland Security.

But officials hope a state law that takes effect today will help curb these blazes.

Every cigarette now sold in Indiana must be "fire safe" and contain two bands in the paper that are intended to cause the cigarette to burn out if left unattended.

"The cigarette should self-extinguish when it hits one of these bands," Fort Wayne Fire Marshal Jim Murua said.

Cigarettes without fire-safe bands burn without the smoker puffing on them and can smolder for up to 45 minutes, the homeland security department said.

If a smoker throws away a lit cigarette or falls asleep with one, the cigarette could cause a fire, Murua said.

Fire-safe cigarettes contain two bands that ideally do not burn unless the smoker puffs on the cigarette, which increases the temperature of the embers. When embers hit one of the bands without an increase in oxygen and temperature, such as when a cigarette is left unattended, then it should burn itself out, Murua said.

The result is that smokers must puff on their cigarettes harder and more often and might have to relight them occasionally, Murua said.

According to the Coalition for Fire-Safe Cigarettes, 24 other states have already enacted legislation requiring that all cigarettes include fire-safe rings, and the remaining states have passed or introduced such laws.

However, at Low Bob's Discount Tobacco, 4601 Lafayette St., employee Twylette Milton said that not all fire-safe cigarettes are created equally. Cigarettes of some brands will continue to burn through the paper when not in use, and others are apt to extinguish themselves when embers hit the band, even if a smoker is taking a drag.

Milton said she regularly fields complaints from customers about the fire-safe cigarettes, which began to fill store shelves in the weeks before today's deadline.

Many smokers, she said, don't like that their cigarettes go out quickly if they are not actively being puffed. Others claim the new bands change the taste.

However, Murua contends that the potential gains well outweigh the inconvenience of having to relight a cigarette.

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# Post-Tribune

## New state law requires all cigarettes burn out quickly

(<http://www.post-trib.com/news/1644417,smoke-law-0630.article>)

June 30, 2009

By Karen Snelling, Post-Tribune staff writer

Retailer Dhiren Shah expects his tobacco sales to drop starting July 1, when a new law will require that all cigarettes sold in Indiana burn out more quickly when left unattended.

"Our customers complain that fire-safe cigarettes go out too quickly and taste very funky," said Shah, owner of Karma Tobacco and Cigar Lounge in Merrillville.

Smokers buy traditional cigarettes by the carton, Shah said, but turn around and walk out if he only has fire-safe smokes in stock.

"It's definitely hurting business already," he said. "And once the regular cigarettes are gone, I think people will probably try to quit smoking because of the terrible taste."

The fire-safe cigarette started appearing in area stores in May, two months ahead of the state mandate.

The cigarettes are made with two to three bands of less porous paper designed to slow down the burning tobacco. Smokers have to puff on the cigarette for it burn through the bands.

Indiana will join 31 other states that already or by the end of summer will require vendors to sell only fire-safe, or low-ignition, cigarettes designed to reduce fire deaths.

"There's no difference in the tobacco or the paper used in the new cigarettes and the regular cigarettes," Indiana State Fire Marshal James Greeson said. "But smokers have to inhale in order for the tobacco to burn through the band or the cigarettes will self-extinguish."

Rose Wilson, manager of the Smoke Shop in Hobart, predicts lighter sales will soar. She said the difference in the way the cigarettes burn and taste has a lot of her customers upset. "I smoke and to be truthful they don't taste any different to me. But a lot of people are (ticked) off."

Joy Respecke of Hobart says her cigarettes taste the same, but she gets annoyed because she has to constantly suck on it to prevent it from going out. "If I set it in an ashtray it goes out immediately," said Respecke, who smokes about a pack a day.

Greeson said the new cigarettes will reduce the number of home fires.

The state had 138 smoking-related fires in 2008, causing four deaths and 11 injuries and \$3.4 million in property damage, according to the National Fire Incident Reporting System.

One-quarter of the victims of the fire fatalities are not the smoker whose cigarette started the blaze: one-third of the victims are children of the smoker; 25 percent are neighbors or friends; 14 percent are spouses or partners; 3 percent are parents.

Along with reducing house fires, Greeson said the fire-safe cigarettes will provide an economic benefit to the state. He said the state will collect \$180,000 in new fees from cigarette manufacturers.

Under the new state law, tobacco companies pay \$800 to register each cigarette brand they sell in Indiana. So far, 44 cigarette makers have registered to sell 225 brands in Indiana, Greeson said.

Tom Gardner, sales clerk for Cigarette Discount Outlet in Highland, said while smokers don't really like the new cigarettes, he doubts many will kick the habit. "That's really hard to do," he said.

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## Are your fireworks safe?

Updated: July 2, 2009 07:58 AM EDT

[Tim 'Treeboy' Bush](#)/Eyewitness News



July 4th means celebrations and fireworks, and many people may not know how to stay safe while shooting off fireworks. Treeboy paid a visit to [USA Fireworks](#) at 4904 S. Emerson with advice on how to stay safe and out of trouble for the holiday weekend.



While it was once only legal to purchase fireworks in Indiana, the law has changed making it legal to shoot them off in the state as well.

"We want everyone to use common sense," Homeland Security's John Erickson said.



That means purchasers must be 18 years of age or older, and fireworks can only be set off on your own property or someone else's property with permission. There are also certain areas in towns and cities designated for setting off fireworks.

"With the law, there are regulations," State Fire Marshal Jim Greeson said. "One benefit of the law is that tax dollars on the fireworks go toward fire fighter training."

Regarding fire, Greeson said it is a good idea to have a bucket of water available, especially if there are small children nearby. Even with sparklers, the wires can get hot, so Greeson suggests giving glow sticks to very small children.

"They aren't dangerous, they last longer, and the kids have fun with them," he said.

Fireworks stores have popped up everywhere and the selection has become more extensive. Even sizes have increased, but Greeson said much of that is because of packaging and promotion. Some of that packaging is extreme, one extending taller than six feet and another with 16,000 firecrackers in one bundle.

"You do have to be careful, because it can create a fire hazard for properties nearby and other types of structures," Erickson said.

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June 30, 2009

## Fireworks dazzle has a higher cost this Independence Day

*By DeAntae Prince*  
*The Indianapolis Star*

INDIANAPOLIS -- Fourth of July celebrations are costing more this year and have forced some cities to seek more help from corporate sponsors to pay for their displays.

Sales at retail locations have been slower than normal, too, though some fireworks stands hope buyers are waiting for expected price cuts that come closer to the holiday.

Cities and towns such as Avon, Greenfield, Indianapolis, Noblesville and Carmel will count on support from businesses to pull off their shows.

At least one city tapped an unusual source of funds to pay for its July 4 festivities. Muncie turned to Mayor Sharon McShurley's Economic Development Incentive Tax, dollars typically reserved for job creation, for its Independence Day show.

Indianapolis isn't new to using outside dollars for its show. The Regions Freedom Blast in the Circle City will be sponsored by Regions Bank for the 39th year.

"We know things have been tough for some with the economy," said Kim Borges, Regions' area marketing manager. "We thought it was really important to continue the show this year."

Noblesville raised \$30,000 from local companies, more than it has had to raise in the past.

"We had some really good supporters that really stepped forward," said Cara Culp, Noblesville public affairs manager. "This year, more than any, we were extremely grateful to offer the same (show) we have for 12 years."

Nathan Kiser, president of Sky Magic, a pyrotechnics company in Clay County, said the cost to put on the big shows is 18 percent higher than last year.

"Over 50 percent of our customers are having budget concerns. About 20 percent actually reduced their show," he said.

A 2008 warehouse explosion in China is partly to blame for the higher costs. About 80 percent of U.S fireworks originate there.

Nationally, about 14,000 fireworks shows are held July Fourth, according to the American Pyrotechnics Association.

Though many communities are cutting back public displays, the number of permits to fireworks retailers are on pace to outnumber last year's, said Rachel Meyer, spokeswoman for the Indiana Department of Homeland Security.

As of last week, the state fire marshal's office had issued 828 retail permits. The office issued 840 permits for all of 2008.

Some retailers said business was picking up as the holiday gets closer.

"Right now, it's slowly getting more and more busy," said Mike Greb, store manager at Phantom Fireworks in Indianapolis. "Probably 90 percent of our sales usually come in the four days preceding July Fourth."

Customer Justin Winburn, 21, said he will wait for the last-minute sales.

"I usually go right around July Fourth," he said. "That's when they usually have their specials and you can get a lot of fireworks for cheap."

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## INDIANA NEWS

Staying Safe While Celebrating July 4th  
By Network Indiana  
7/4/2009

Thousands of Hoosiers will celebrate the nation's 233rd birthday with fireworks. The Richard M. Fairbanks Burn Center at Wishard Memorial Hospital and the Indiana State Police have some tips to ensure your celebration is not only safe, but legal.

Make sure only adults handle fireworks.

Kari Gabehart, the director of the Wishard burn nit, says many children suffer severe burns to their hands and arms due to improper handling of sparklers, bottle rockets and firecrackers. Sparklers are the second largest cause of fireworks injuries, heating up to 1800 degrees -- which is hot enough to melt gold. Instead, give children glow in the dark wands or noise makers.

Sgt. Curt Durnil with the Indiana State Police recommends having a bucket of water handy or a water hose nearby in case of a mishap.

Don't build or experiment with homemade fireworks and avoid re-lighting a "dud" firework. Wait 15 to 20 minutes instead and then soak it in a bucket of water.

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources is reminding boaters to have fun but take safety precautions over the independence day weekend and obey all of the rules on the water.

Your boat must be registered and you are required to have the proper life jackets for everyone on the boat.

Indiana Conservation Officer Max Spainhour says alcohol and boating don't go hand-in-hand. He says the majority of drownings conservation officers respond to are alcohol-related.

Boaters are not prohibited from drinking alcohol, but Spainhour says you should make sure there is someone on board who is able to operate the boat.

Operators are advised to always wear the kill switch in an effort to prevent anyone from going overboard in case of an accident.

And be courteous -- be aware of other people and, when you see a boat that's moored or anchored, try not to wake them or spray them. It could result in a ticket.

On this holiday weekend, Hoosiers are reminded to use caution when cooking on charcoal or other types of grills.

State Fire Marshall James Greeson says most rules that cover grilling are local jurisdictional rules, like apartment complexes or neighborhood communities, where they prohibit grills on decks or in garages -- any place that could have a fire or carbon monoxide potential.

He says it's never a good idea to grill on a wooden patio or balcony. Most apartment complexes prohibit the practice.

Greeson recommends you keep the grill away from the building and shrubbery -- anything that has the potential to catch on fire.

If you're using a charcoal grill, keep the children a safe distance and follow the instructions on the package.

He says people who live in homes with vinyl siding should be especially careful because the heat from the grill will melt the siding and is potentially a fire hazard.

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