

The National Gasoline Safety Project Partners with Shriners Hospitals for Children

Shriners Hospitals for Children® and The National Gasoline Safety Project, a safety outreach of the Portable Fuel Container Manufacturers Association, are pleased to announce our partnership on the new Stop Gas Fires campaign to reduce gasoline related burn injuries to children.

Though gasoline burn data is not directly tracked, the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System estimates 1,500 children a year are injured or killed in gasoline fires, according to monitored hospital admissions. Overall, 14,500 Americans die each year from burn injuries and burn-related infections.

Shriners Hospitals for Children and the National Gasoline Safety Project aim to put an end to gas fires and burns by working with parents and community groups to promote safe gasoline handling practices, specifically spreading the message that gasoline and fire never mix.

According to a national independent survey the vast majority of parents do not use gas to start a fire but parents who do so mistakenly think it's something "everybody" does. "We just want to make sure the truth is loud and clear. Most parents do not use gas to start fires. If people think it's a common thing to do, they're fooling themselves," said Dr. James Johnson, a burn care surgeon from Tulsa, Oklahoma, who supports the cause. "Ironically, the research shows that even parents who use gas to start fires know it's not safe to do. They are putting their kids at risk."

The Stop Gas Fires campaign includes a website (www.stopgasfires.org) that allows parents to view a video about a teenage gas burn survivor and connect with others parents though email, Facebook and Twitter. Stopgasfires.org also features an Organizers site where parents and other community leaders can find the tools they need to spread the message.

The National Gasoline Safety Project has placed campaign hangtags on new portable gasoline fuel containers sold in the United States to remind parents that gas and fire never mix. The hangtags feature the Shriners Hospitals for Children logo with personal testimonies of respected leaders including Johnson, firefighters, a burn survivor, and others who are working to stop gas fires.

YOUR WORK IS ESSENTIAL TO HELP STOP GAS FIRES

Community level engagement is key to our success. Our national partners have helped create research-based messages and easy-to-use materials but it's community partners like Shriners International, that can deliver our message to parents and children. You are trusted in your community and can use your leadership, local expertise, and community networks to spread the word.

Like many Shriners across the country, you may already be a part of Shriners Hospitals for Children's annual Burn Awareness campaign – or your temple may just be getting started. That's why we've designed the National Gasoline Safety Project as a flexible campaign that can complement existing burn awareness efforts. We offer a variety of free, downloadable materials that address gasoline safety. Pick and choose the materials that best fit your needs. Use just one or two items to refresh an existing program or to create a new fire safety angle for the local news media. Package all our materials together to create a comprehensive gasoline burn awareness campaign in your community.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Here are some ideas on how you might promote gasoline fire safety in your community. We welcome additional suggestions. You can share your ideas with other community safety advocates at [StopGasFires.org/organizers](https://www.stopgasfires.org/organizers).

1. Become a community partner. Community partners across the nation are joining the campaign and sharing their ideas and experiences. Becoming a partner is easy – you simply sign up on our website. There is no cost to join, and none of your information will be shared unless you choose. You can network with other community partners and find or contribute suggestions, ideas and lessons learned. The first 50 community partners to sign up will receive a free STOP GAS FIRES banner to hang in their office and use in a variety of events.

➤ What you can do

- Sign up at [StopGasFires.org/organizers](https://www.stopgasfires.org/organizers).
- Contribute ideas, suggestions and lessons learned to help other community partners.
- Spread the word about the National Gasoline Safety Project to other community organizers. Send an email, give out this campaign brief, or “like” us at facebook.com/stopgasfires.

2. Spread the word: StopGasFires.org

The StopGasFires.org website is aimed at parents, providing information about gasoline fire safety and recruiting them to help build awareness by spreading the word to friends and family members. It includes a video of teen burn survivor Austin Bailiff, an email tool, information on gasoline safety, and an emergency burn treatment fact sheet.

➤ What you can do

- Promote StopGasFires.org during community events and presentations. Free, downloadable promotional materials – including presentation slides, flyers, posters, and other items – are available on StopGasFires.org/organizers. You can use the materials as a supplement to an existing program or as a stand-alone gasoline burn awareness initiative.
- Download and show the video of Austin Bailiff, who was critically burned in a gas fire at age 14.
- Add StopGasFires.org materials to your Shriners Hospitals for Children Burn Awareness week packets and distribute the packets to your local network of community educators, first responders and schools.
- Distribute the StopGasFires.org and Shriners Hospitals for Children Burn Awareness materials at your table at local community health events.

3. Share the hangtags. A series of hangtags is being placed on all approved portable gasoline fuel containers sold in stores (reaching an estimated 22 million people each year). Each hangtag tells a personal story and contains a clear message to parents: your kids are watching what you do. If you are not careful with gasoline, you don't just put yourself at risk – you put your children at risk, too. And it's not what good parents do.

Marketing research shows it can take several different “touch points” – that is, interactions with an audience -- before a message sinks in. By sharing the hangtag and gas can with parents and children at safety events, you can start a conversation about gasoline safety. This improves the chances that the next time they see a hangtag when they visit a store or purchase a gas can, they will remember the safety behaviors you have described.

➤ What you can do

- Bring a clean, empty portable gasoline container along with a printout of one of the hangtags (available on StopGasFires.org/organizers). Pass the hangtag

around the audience and talk about the National Gasoline Safety Project. Then pass the gas can around and ask audience members to read the safety precautions on the side of the can. (Step-by-step instructions for a structured Gas Can Conversation activity are available on StopGasFires.org/organizers.)

4. Real Men, Real Fires. Our research shows that the vast majority of parents don't use gas to start fires. Why? They know it's not safe – and they know their children are watching. Ironically, even parents who do mix fire and gas know it's not safe to do. So why do they do it? One reason is parents who use gasoline think it's hard to start a fire without it (other parents disagree). Particularly worrisome is the fact that parents who use gas are mainly doing so to start barbecue grills, campfires, and trash or brush fires – places where children may be present.

One way to help put an end to gas fires is to let parents know how easy it is to properly start a fire without gasoline. That's the aim of RealMenRealFires.com. And since it's a tough subject to broach, we thought a little humor would help. The website includes funny quizzes, web stickers, and an email tool to help spread the word.

➤ **What you can do**

- Promote RealMenRealFires.com during fire safety presentations. Downloadable designs for posters and buttons are available at on the website.
- Spread the word about how real men (and women) start fires to your friends, colleagues and family members. Send an email, give out this campaign brief, or find RealMenRealFires.com on Facebook and share the link.

5. Get some media attention. If you have been committed to fire safety for any length of time, you know it can be hard to drum up interest among the local media year after year. Our media kit makes it easy to grab some attention with customizable materials that provide a fresh news angle. Use the sample press release or Op-Ed to raise awareness about gas fire safety and highlight the work your community group is doing.

➤ **What you can do**

- Customize the sample media materials with your organization's logo, contact information, and plans for any local events. You can find these materials at StopGasFires.org/organizers.
- Call your local newspaper or radio station and find out where to send the information. Email your customized media materials and follow up with a phone call.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL GASOLINE SAFETY PROJECT

The National Gasoline Safety Project (NGSP) formed to reduce gas fire burn injuries to children. The Project is supported by the Portable Fuel Container Manufacturers Association in partnership with Shriners Hospitals for Children and Safe Kids USA.

Childhood injuries and deaths that involve gasoline are not directly tracked but the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System estimates 1,500 children a year are injured or killed in gasoline fires, according to monitored hospital admissions. Gasoline burn injuries can have severe and lifelong consequences.

An independent national survey funded by the NGSP found that, despite knowing the dangers, a minority of parents use gasoline to start fires. The survey of 1,009 parents was conducted in 2008 and had a margin of error of +/- 4%.

The survey found:

- 1 in 5 parents who stores gasoline at home has used it to start fires.
- Parents who use gas to start fires usually do so to light a barbecue grill, burn trash or brush, or start a campfire or bonfire.
- Parents who use gas to start fires are twice as likely to have learned this behavior from their own parents.
- Three quarters of parents (76%) who use gas to start fires state that they think this is something others frequently do as well – that is, that it is a “normal” behavior.
- Using gasoline to start fires is NOT a common behavior; more than 80% of parents do not use gas to start fires.
- More than half of parents have stored gas in a location that can be reached by children.

NGSP created StopGasFires.org to address this safety issue. The campaign is targeting parents, who buy gasoline, choose where to store it at home, and teach children how to handle gasoline both through what they say and what they do.

Campaign Goals

- Increase awareness that using gas to start fires is outside the social norm;
- Decrease the number of parents who use gasoline to start fires and who therefore model that behavior to their children; and
- Increase the number of parents who know alternative methods for starting fires.

Ultimately, the campaign goal is to reduce the number of gasoline-related injuries to children.