

Massachusetts Fire Marshall reports no child fire deaths in 2 years, comprehensive fire education achieves milestone

State Fire Marshal Peter J. Ostroskey said, "On January 8, 2021, I announced that for the first time on record, there had been zero child fire deaths in a calendar year. Today marks a new milestone. It has been two whole years since a child has died in a fire in Massachusetts." The last fire that claimed a child's life occurred on March 16, 2019 in Pittsfield.

"I attribute this record-breaking milestone to the 26 years of the Student Awareness of Fire Education Program (S.A.F.E.). Firefighters and classroom teachers have raised a fire safe generation of children by teaching key fire safety lessons in an age-appropriate manner that fits with the state's curriculum frameworks," said State Fire Marshal Ostroskey.

Chief Michael Newbury, president of the Fire Chiefs' Association of Massachusetts said, "The collaboration between firefighter-educators and classroom teachers has made fire safety accessible to our youngsters who brought these messages home to their families. Thank you."

So far this year, there have been 12 fire deaths and 75% of the victims were people over 65. "Regardless of your age, make sure you have working smoke alarms that are less than 10 years old on every level of your home and practice your home escape plan," said Ostroskey, "You may only have 1-3 minutes to escape a typical house fire before being overcome by toxic gases and extreme heat." Building on the success of the

Student Awareness of the Fire Education (S.A.F.E.) Program, the state created the Senior SAFE Program to reduce fire deaths among what is now the most vulnerable population – seniors. People over 65 account for nearly half of all fire deaths in the Commonwealth.

Both the S.A.F.E. and Senior SAFE Programs provide grants to local fire departments to collaborate with local schools and senior service agencies to provide fire safety education. For more information visit: Student Awareness of Fire Education Program (S.A.F.E.) or Senior SAFE Program.