



## Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health

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MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Health Department Recognizes Fire Prevention Week**

(Mason City) - The Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health would like to recognize National Fire Prevention Week by reminding residents about the dangers cigarettes and e-cigarettes pose in starting fires.

Many home fires are started by conventional cigarettes, cigars, e-cigarettes, and similar emerging devices. Although the number of fatalities and injuries caused by residential fires has declined gradually over the past several decades, many residential fire-related deaths remain preventable and continue to pose a significant public health problem.

E-cigarettes and other emerging products are still very new to the market. With various devices used to charge and operate e-cigarettes, these devices aren't always approved by the proper channels. Some have been found to explode or combust while charging or being used. Fire officials have warned that if e-cigarette users leave their device on charge for too long it could pose a serious fire risk. Unlike other battery-operated equipment, such as cellphones, e-cigarette chargers don't have a built-in default setting to switch to off once the battery is full.

The FDA has stated, "As the safety and efficacy of e-cigarettes have not been fully studied, consumers...have no way of knowing whether they are safe for their intended use."

There has also been a bigger push to encourage smoke free homes and multi-unit housing. By decreasing the number of properties with active smokers in them, the risk of unintentional fires also decreases.

"We encourage all homes to be smoke free, especially multi-unit homes," said Penny McCaslin, Tobacco Program Coordinator, Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health. "If tenants or landlords are interested in making their property smoke-free, I can provide them with resources and guidance in making the process simple."

The CDC also recommends to never smoke inside your home. They say if you do smoke in your home, never smoke in bed or leave burning cigarettes unattended. It is unsafe to smoke while drowsy or under the influence of alcohol or medications. Do not empty burning or hot ashes in a trash can, and keep ashtrays away from upholstered furniture and curtains.

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Facebook: Cerro Gordo County Public Health • Twitter page: <http://twitter.com/CGPublicHealth>

Web site: [www.cghealth.com](http://www.cghealth.com)

The Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health encourages residents to quit smoking. They are here to help you quit. Registration is open for Freedom From Smoking clinics, and Quitline Iowa is always available by calling 1-800-QUIT-NOW.

For more information on Freedom From Smoking, Quitline Iowa, or the Smoke Free Homes program, please visit [www.cghealth.com](http://www.cghealth.com), or call 641-421-9329.

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