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News Release

For Immediate Release

PSA highlights dangers of careless smoking

In the last five years, nearly 250 Springfield residential fires have been attributed to careless smoking. That's nearly 20 percent of all residential fires occurring in that same time period, and 10 times the national average for careless smoking fires. Those fires accounted for \$5 million in damage and dozens of residents displaced from their homes. Additionally, in the last 10 years, 14 people in Springfield have lost their lives as a result of careless smoking.

A new public service announcement sponsored by the Springfield Fire Department (available at <http://cityview.springfieldmo.gov/media/watch-your-butt>) encourages smokers to prevent careless smoking fires by disposing of cigarettes properly.

Cigarettes should never be thrown out of a car window or extinguished in a makeshift ashtray such as Tupperware or a potted plant. Smokers should never smoke in bed or while drowsy.

Other tips include:

- Use a sturdy ashtray or can filled with sand to collect ashes. Ashtrays should be set on something sturdy and hard to ignite, like a table.
- Put it out. The cigarette really needs to be completely stubbed out in the ashtray.
- Do not let cigarette butts pile up on top of one another. Empty your ashtray often by first soaking the cigarette butts in water. NEVER toss hot cigarette butts or ashes in the trash.
- Check to make sure your smoke alarms are in good working order.

Remember: if you smoke, put it out. All the way. Every time.

For more information or a copy of the PSA, contact: Fire and Life Safety Educator Cara Restelli Erwin, (417) 864-1699 or cerwin@springfieldmo.gov.