

PALATKA FIRE DEPARTMENT

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Juvenile Firesetter Program Overview

The Palatka Fire Department Juvenile Firesetters network is being created in response to the growing need for a standardized and effective juvenile firesetter prevention, intervention and rehabilitation program. This program is being developed in order to offer a non-judicial alternative to youth who have set fires and to children who are at risk of involvement with firesetting activities

The Juvenile Firesetter program of Palatka Fire Department is dedicated to providing the highest quality of fire education awareness and rehabilitative service to the community and is committed to reducing injury, death and loss of property due to misuse of fire by juveniles.

We will accomplish this through networking support agencies, counseling, educating and enforcing practices that will rehabilitate offenders and educate family, friends and the public.

The challenges to fire services, law enforcement, schools, mental health and other professionals is the early recognition and accurate identification of youth who engage in firesetting activities; identifying the underlying cause or motivation behind their behavior and providing them and their families with meaningful counseling, treatment and other direct services.

The Palatka Fire Department Juvenile Firesetters network is being established in a concerted effort to meet this challenge in Palatka.

Juvenile Firesetters Fire Safety Education Program:

The Palatka Fire Department Juvenile Firesetters network has developed a fire safety education program to provide fire prevention, fire safety education and firesetter awareness to youth offenders, youth at risk and their families.

The network philosophy is that fire safety is a family affair. Great emphasis is placed on educating the family unit to insure that the fire prevention and fire safety concepts presented during the program are reinforced in the home after the juvenile and family complete the program.

The program is available to all children and their families from three years of age through age 18. It is open to all firesetters, whether the activity was fireplay or criminal intent.

Participation in all parts of the education program is mandatory for all referred juveniles and their families for successful termination from the network and the diversionary program.

Class Schedules/Locations

Classes will be scheduled on an as needed basis, case by case, as each group of children is referred to the network. The guardian of the juvenile will be contacted and given time and place for the firesetter program. Preferably these programs will take place as soon as possible following an incident.

Programs will be held during normal business hours, after hours during the evening and occasionally on weekends. Program locations will be determined based on the number of participants and the availability of facilities.

Participants will be required to attend all the classes to be considered as passing the program.

Goals and Objectives

1. The fire safety educator and the child's guardian will learn details about the firesetting act that caused the family to be in attendance at this program. There may be additional firesetting acts that come to light as the child feels free to share during the program.
2. The child and guardian will learn the true dangers of fire; how it can quickly envelop an area and spread toxic smoke throughout a building.
3. The child and guardian will learn why fire is so deadly and will know the difference between a real fire and a "made for entertainment purposes" fire.
4. The family will become aware of the importance of fire safe behavior and will plan ahead to be safe in case of fire.
5. The child will more thoroughly understand how his or her previous fireplay actions put themselves and/or their family in jeopardy. The guardian will understand the importance of vigilance in assisting their child in practicing fire safe behavior.