

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 3, 1976

Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

FIRE PREVENTION WEEK, 1976

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

A PROCLAMATION

Two hundred years ago the United States of America declared its independence. More than a century before that the need for organized fire protection was recognized in the colonies with the establishment of the first fire departments. The same appreciation of the need for community protection is still needed today in order to avoid the destructive effect of uncontrolled fire.

Each year in the United States alone, more than three million fires and explosions kill 12,000 persons; seriously burn another 300,000; and destroy more than \$4 billion in property. Another \$7 billion is spent for fire departments, fire insurance, and related costs.

The richest and most technologically advanced nation in the world, we nevertheless lead all the major industrialized countries in per capita deaths and property loss from fire.

Most fires can be traced to a lack of active concern for fire safety. Unfortunately, the innocent -- the very young and the aged -- are most frequently the victims.

This tragic situation need not continue. Methods of coping with fire's destructiveness have been developed. But technological advances alone will not stop the needless waste in human suffering and resources. A greater awareness of fire safety by all of us remains the only real answer.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GERALD R. FORD, President of the United States of America, do hereby designate the week beginning Sunday, October 3, 1976, as Fire Prevention Week.

I urge all citizens to work with their families and communities to learn and practice the basic rules of fire safety.

I call upon all State and local governments, business, labor and other organizations, as well as schools, civic groups, and the media to observe Fire Prevention Week, to provide useful fire-safety information to the public, and to solicit the active participation of all citizens in fire prevention programs.

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I also ask the National Fire Protection Association, members of the Joint Council of National Fire Service Organizations, the National Fire Prevention and Control Administration, and other fire safety groups to provide the leadership and planning for a national fire prevention effort.

Finally, I urge every citizen to remember that fire safety must be practiced year-round to be truly effective, not just during Fire Prevention Week.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this
third day of September, in the year of our
Lord nineteen hundred seventy six, and of the Independence
of the United States of America the two hundred and first.

GERALD R. FORD

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