

What is a firesetter?

Fire Interest: Under 7 years old

- Frequently asks questions about fire
- Incorporates fire-related objects in play
- Asks permission to participate in supervised activities such as lighting a candle

Curiosity or Experimental: Ages 2-10 years old

- Unintentionally starts a fire
- Lack of supervision
- Ready access to lighters and matches
- Does not understand the destructiveness of fire
- Tries to put out or goes for help

Troubled Firesetter: All ages

- Intentionally seeks fire-starting materials
- Has set 2 or more fires
- Ignites papers, leaves, personal property or specific locations
- Uses fire to express emotions
- May not understand the consequences of uncontrolled fire
- **Will continue to set fires until needs are identified and met**

Criminal Firesetter: Ages 10-18 years old

- History of anti-social behavior
- Fires are set with intent to destroy – acts of vandalism and malicious destruction
- Targets are schools, open fields, dumpsters, abandoned buildings

Emotionally Disturbed: All ages

- Fires may be random, ritualized, or with specific intent to destroy property
- Chronic history of school behavioral, social, emotional or physical problems
- Set many fires