

Unsafe Lighters Banned to Prevent Fires, Keep Kids and Families Safe

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<http://newiproggressive.com/images/stories/S5/firefighters-s5.jpg>



Governor goes to Pittsville to sign bill designed to combat the dangerous rise in knock-off lighters.

PITTSVILLE — Gov. Tony Evers today at Pittsville Elementary School signed Assembly Bill 917, now 2023 Wisconsin Act 271, which prohibits the sale of counterfeit and unsafe lighters to help combat the dangerous rise in knock-off lighters that fail American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) Standards. Gov. Evers signed the bill in Pittsville, Wisconsin, after receiving a letter from Pittsville Fire Department Chief Jerry Minor. Act 271 is the result of the steadfast advocacy of Chief Minor, students, and leaders in the Pittsville community, who have worked for over a decade to pass legislation in response to the tragic local death of an eight-year-old in 2008, who died in a home fire that may have been sparked by a lighter.



“Unsafe lighters endanger our kids, families, and communities, often creating dangerous and largely preventable situations for our fire departments, EMS providers, and other first responders. This bipartisan legislation will help keep unsafe lighters off the shelves to help keep our kids safe across Wisconsin while improving and promoting fire safety, reducing fire

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play, and helping prevent fires from starting in the first place,” said Gov. Evers. “This bill has been a long time coming, and I’m grateful for the hard work of students and educators from Pittsville Elementary, Fire Chief Minor, and countless other first responders and community leaders who’ve spent more than a decade working to reach consensus and bipartisan support on this important issue.”

In the wake of the 2008 tragedy, Fire Chief Minor, students from Pittsville Elementary School, and several first responder organizations have advocated for state lawmakers to ban the sale of certain lighters to minors in Wisconsin. Legislation aiming to prohibit the display and sale of certain lighters to minors has been introduced during almost every legislative session since 2009 but has failed to pass both the Assembly and the Senate until now.

“I have spent nearly two decades of my career as a first responder advocating on behalf of this important issue to keep our kids and communities safe, and today, I am thrilled to join the governor, students, and community members in seeing this bill finally become law,” said Fire Chief Minor. “Unfortunately, Pittsville knows firsthand the tragic consequences that can occur from fire play with a lighter, and this bill will make a real difference in helping turn the tide of the rising issue of unsafe, unregulated lighters and the threat they pose for kids across Wisconsin.”

Assembly Bill 917 passed with bipartisan support and support from the Professional Fire Fighters of Wisconsin, Wisconsin Sheriffs and Deputy Sheriffs Association, Wisconsin State Fire Chiefs Association, and the Wisconsin State Firefighters Association.

[Assembly Bill 917](#), now 2023 Wisconsin Act 271:

- Provides that no person may offer for sale or sell, or offer a free sample of, a counterfeit lighter or unsafe lighter;
 - Provides that the prohibition would not apply to any of the following:
 - The interstate transportation of counterfeit or unsafe lighters that pass through Wisconsin;
- or
- The storage of counterfeit or unsafe lighters in a warehouse or distribution center if the warehouse or distribution center is not open to the public for the purposes of retail sale or distribution.
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- Defines lighter as any electrical or mechanical device that operates using any type of fuel and that is intended for use in igniting cigarettes, cigars, pipes, charcoal or gas grills, or fireplaces;
 - Defines counterfeit lighter as a lighter that infringes on an intellectual property right of a citizen of the United States or a person that is protected by federal or state intellectual property law; and
 - Defines unsafe lighter as:
 - A disposable or refillable cigarette, cigar, or pipe lighter that does not comply with ASTM International standard F400-20.
 - A utility, grill, or fireplace lighter, a lighting rod, or a gas match that does not comply with

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ASTM International standard F2201-20.