



## 'Fire-Safe' Cigarette Law Yields Results

### First Year of 'Fire-Safe' Cigarette Law in New York Yields Fewer Deaths

By MICHAEL GORMLEY

The Associated Press

**ALBANY, N.Y.** - Fewer people have died in smoking-related fires since New York last year became the first state to require that tobacco companies sell self-extinguishing cigarettes, according to records released Tuesday.

State officials were optimistic about the data, but said it was too early to draw conclusions.

"We are encouraged by the results and hope the trend continues," said Laurence Sombke of the state Office of Fire Prevention and Control.

Last year 28 people died in fires in New York blamed on cigarettes. Deaths from such fires totaled 43 in 2000, 44 in 2001, 38 in 2002, and more than 30 in 2003, for which the state has incomplete data.

The records also show a month-to-month decline after New York required the new "fire-safe" cigarettes in June 2004.

"This is it. This is the evidence that lives are being saved," said Russell Sciandra, director of the Center for a Tobacco Free New York.

Fire-safe smokes are identified by an asterisk, dash or diamond next to the bar code on a pack of cigarettes. The cigarettes will go out if they're not puffed on regularly.

About 900 Americans die each year and another 2,500 are hurt by fires started by unattended cigarettes.

Other states are following New York's lead.

Vermont will begin requiring the sale of self-extinguishing cigarettes in May 2006. In September, the California Assembly sent Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger a bill to require that all cigarettes sold in California be designed to go out when they're not being puffed. The bill is modeled on New York's law.

In Canada, sales of fire-safe cigarette will begin Oct. 1.

*Copyright 2006 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.*

Copyright © 2006 ABC News Internet Ventures