



WATERTOWN FIRE DEPARTMENT

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PRESS RELEASE

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Chapter 276 of the Acts of 2010- AN ACT PROHIBITING THE USE OF NOVELTY LIGHTERS

Watertown, MA – The Watertown Fire Department is pleased to announce that on August 9, 2010, Governor Deval Patrick signed into law a prohibition of the manufacture, sale, exchange, storage or transportation of any novelty lighter in the Commonwealth. Whether being confused for toys or played with for their likeness to toys, novelty lighters have been the cause of many tragic fires.

In general, novelty lighter is defined as a mechanical or electrical device, which produces a flame and due to its physical or audio features, would appeal to a child under the age of 10. Such features are those that resemble cartoon characters, toy gun, watch, musical instrument, etc. and which plays musical notes or otherwise displays flashing lights. The thrust of the statute is to prohibit toy like novelty lighters. Violations of the statute are punishable by fines not less than \$500 nor more than \$1,000 or by imprisonment for not more than one year, or both.

The statute contains several exceptions for novelty lighters: (i) collectibles manufactured before January 1, 1980; (ii) disposable or refillable lighters with logos, labels, or other artwork printed on the lighter or on a shrink wrapped sleeve, provided they do not otherwise resemble a novelty lighter; and (iii) lighters not intended for sale or use in the Commonwealth, being transported or temporarily being stored while in interstate commerce.

The Watertown Fire Prevention Bureau is providing information to retailers and will conduct spot site inspections to ensure compliance. For any questions, please contact the Fire Prevention Bureau at 617-972-6510.