

**Proclamation 8638 of March 18, 2011****National Poison Prevention Week, 2011**

*By the President of the United States of America  
A Proclamation*

Each day, emergency rooms treat nearly 2,000 Americans for accidental poisonings, and dozens die as a result of ingesting, inhaling, or otherwise exposing themselves to poisonous substances. In many cases, these tragic incidents are preventable. During National Poison Prevention Week, I encourage all Americans to identify possible dangers in the home, take action to address poisoning hazards, and learn how to respond if a poison emergency should occur.

Children are particularly susceptible to unintentional poisoning. More than half of all reported poison exposures involve children under the age of six, and many occur when unsupervised children find and consume medicines or harmful chemicals. Unintentional poisonings among young people often occur when misusing or abusing prescription medications such as pain killers, sedatives, and stimulants taken from a home medicine cabinet. Parents and caregivers can help prevent these injuries by taking simple steps to secure medications and other dangerous materials including resealing child-resistant containers, placing drugs and toxic chemicals out of reach of children, and storing all these products in locked or childproof cabinets.

Sadly, death rates from unintentional poisonings have increased steadily in recent years. Many adult poisonings stem from accidental or intentional exposure to over-the-counter or prescription drugs. These can be avoided by reading labels before taking medications, storing medicines in their original containers, and safely disposing of unused prescription medication. These actions can reduce the risk posed by medications with abuse potential. All Americans can help prevent needless harm from hazardous materials by becoming more aware of the dangers of poisonings and the ways we can prevent and respond to these incidents.

In the event of an accidental poisoning, quick action can prevent serious injury and save lives. If confronted with a suspected poisoning, individuals should call the national poison control hotline at 1-800-222-1222. I encourage families to post this number near their home telephone, which connects callers to potentially life-saving information at local and regional poison control centers 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

To encourage Americans to learn more about the dangers of accidental poisonings and to take appropriate preventive measures, the Congress, by joint resolution approved September 26, 1961, as amended (75 Stat. 681), has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation designating the third week of March each year as “National Poison Prevention Week.”

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim March 20 through March 26, 2011, as “National Poison Prevention Week.” I call upon all Americans to observe this week by taking actions to protect their families from hazardous household materials and from misuse of prescription medications.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this eighteenth day of March, in the year of our Lord two thousand eleven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-fifth.

BARACK OBAMA

**Proclamation 8639 of March 24, 2011**

**100th Anniversary of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire**

*By the President of the United States of America  
A Proclamation*

On March 25, 1911, a fire spread through the cramped floors of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory in lower Manhattan. Flames spread quickly through the 8th, 9th, and 10th floors—overcrowded, littered with cloth scraps, and containing few buckets of water to douse the flames—giving the factory workers there little time to escape. When the panicked workers tried to flee, they encountered locked doors and broken fire escapes, and were trapped by long tables and bulky machines. As bystanders watched in horror, young workers began jumping out of the windows to escape the inferno, falling helplessly to their deaths on the street below.

By the time the fire was extinguished, nearly 150 individuals had perished in an avoidable tragedy. The exploited workers killed that day were mostly young women, recent immigrants of Jewish and Italian descent. The catastrophe sent shockwaves through New York City and the immigrant communities of Manhattan’s Lower East Side, where families struggled to recognize the charred remains of their loved ones in makeshift morgues. The last victims were officially identified just this year.

A century later, we reflect not only on the tragic loss of these young lives, but also on the movement they inspired. The Triangle factory fire was a galvanizing moment, calling American leaders to reexamine their approach to workplace conditions and the purpose of unions. The fire awakened the conscience of our Nation, inspiring sweeping improvements to safety regulations both in New York and across the United States. The tragedy strengthened the potency of organized labor, which gave voice to previously powerless workers. A witness to the fire, Frances Perkins carried the gruesome images of that day through a lifetime of advocacy for American workers and into her role as the Secretary of Labor and our country’s first female Cabinet Secretary.

Despite the enormous progress made since the Triangle factory fire, we are still fighting to provide adequate working conditions for all women and men on the job, ensure no person within our borders is exploited for their labor, and uphold collective bargaining as a tool to give workers a seat at the tables of power. Working Americans are the backbone of our communities and power the engine of our economy. As we mark the anniversary of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire, let us resolve to renew the urgency that tragedy inspired and recommit to our shared responsibility to provide a safe environment for all American workers.