

## **DEAR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS,**

Due to an increase in fires across the County of Brant, City of Brantford, Haldimand County and Norfolk County, your Fire Prevention Officers are asking for your help! In normal times we routinely meet with students face-to-face to teach them about fire safety. In current times we have not been able to do so. We are urging parents, guardians and caregivers to bridge this gap by reviewing the principles of fire safety with the children in your care. If you are able to implement the basic fire safety principles of Prevention, Detection and Escape in your home you will be giving children the knowledge, skills and confidence to survive a fire should one occur (and we work hard every day to try and make sure that fires don't occur!).

Please discuss the following with children and implement the suggestions in your home:

**PREVENTION:** small changes in habits have huge benefits for stopping a fire from ever happening

- Cooking is the number one cause of fires throughout the region. Be fire safe in the kitchen by never leaving cooking unattended. If a fire does occur on the stovetop carefully slide a lid or baking tray over the pan or pot to smother the fire out.
- Charge electronic devices on non-combustible surfaces like a counter top. NEVER charge electronics on combustible surfaces like beds or couches.
- Opt for battery operated candles. If using traditional candles they should only be lit by an adult. Use a non-combustible, sturdy container for candles. Keep candles 3ft. from anything that can burn and blow them out when you leave the room. Keep matches & lighters out of reach of children!
- Space heaters & other heating equipment need to be plugged directly into a wall outlet due to their high wattage requirements. Keep a 3 foot clearance around these appliances from combustibles and never leave them unattended.

**DETECTION:** installing, maintaining & testing safety devices is crucial in giving your family the precious time needed to escape in an emergency

- Only working smoke & carbon monoxide (CO) alarms save lives. Demonstrate & discuss the importance of knowing the sounds of these alarms to all members of your household.
- A working smoke alarm MUST be located on every story of your home & outside sleeping areas. A working CO alarm should be installed on all sleeping levels of the home. It's the law! Ideally, there should be a smoke alarm in each bedroom and all the alarms should be interconnected.
- Test these devices monthly to ensure that they are in working order. Check the date on the side or back of the alarm and replace alarms accordingly. Smoke alarms have a life span of 8-10 years and CO alarms have a life span of 5, 7 or 10 years.

**ESCAPE:** A regularly practiced Home Fire Escape Plan will support your family's safe evacuation from the home in the event of an emergency

- Involve ALL members of the household in the discussion and creation of the Home Fire Escape Plan
- Practice this plan at least twice a year! Sound the smoke or CO alarm and execute the plan as if it was a real emergency. Identify the members in your household who may need assistance in escaping and decide who in the household will provide that assistance in a real emergency.
- Choose a pre-determined meeting place in front of your home for all members of the household to meet once they've evacuated. Teach children to NEVER go back inside for anything. "Get out, stay out!" Call 9-1-1 from your meeting place.
- If you discover an emergency in an apartment/condo building it is important to remember to sound the building's fire alarm system to alert other occupants. Call 9-1-1 for help. When evacuating always take the stairs – never the elevator.
- If you are unable to evacuate your home, gather your family in a room with a large window then close & seal the door behind you. Call 9-1-1 and provide your address and your specific location within the home.

Thank-you for making fire safety a priority in your home! Knowledge is power. By educating children about the importance of Prevention, Detection & Escape, we are giving the children of our community the knowledge and skills they need to navigate an emergency.

For more information please visit your local Fire Department's website. We are happy to answer any questions you may have.

Yours in fire safety,

