

Risk Guardian



PUBLISHED IN THE INTEREST OF SAFETY IN ONTARIO

Ability of smoke alarms to waken children questioned

Growing concern that children can sleep through a blaring smoke alarm is an emerging issue in Canada and the United States.

In the United States, the National Fire Protection Association responded to a news program that showed a simulated fire emergency in which children sleep through a smoke alarm sounding.

As a result, NFPA updated its fact sheet entitled 'Home Fire Escape Planning and Practice'. It includes: "Allow children to master fire escape planning and practice before holding a fire drill at night when they are sleeping. The objective is to practice, not to frighten, so telling children there will be a drill before they go to bed can be as effective as a surprise drill. If children or others do not readily waken to the sound of the smoke alarm, or if there are infants or family members with mobility limitations, make sure that someone is assigned to assist them in a fire drill."

The majority of fatal fires in Ontario occur at night in people's homes. This is incorporated in the Ontario Fire Code: "Smoke alarms shall be installed between each sleeping area and the remainder of the dwelling area, and where the sleeping areas are served by hallways, the smoke alarms shall be installed in the hallways."

Available Research

In Ontario, an experiment was conducted in 2002 by Fire



SLEEPY HEAD: Concern has risen over the effectiveness of smoke alarms to waken sleeping children.

Prevention Officer Derrick Ethridge from Loyalist Township Emergency Services to see if a group of local grade six children could hear the smoke alarm when they were sleeping.

All 84 children were exposed to two separate smoke alarm tests between 9pm and 11pm while sleeping. From these tests, 53% of the children tested did not react in less than one minute. This included 31% of children who did not respond at all.

Other research includes an Australian study that showed children under age 15 were

likely to sleep through smoke alarms.

The reasons why children don't hear or react to a smoke alarm may vary. Parents won't know how their children will react to the smoke alarm until they test their responses. Children's safety is the responsibility of the caregiver. Planning and practising a home escape plan is essential, along with working smoke alarms on every level and outside all sleeping areas.

NOTE: This issue does not only affect children. It can affect adults and other adults.

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Prevention cited in Romanow report

Roy Romanow's Commission on the Future of Health Care in Canada has recommended making primary health care "the fundamental pivot of Canada's health care system," with prevention and promotion initiatives a central focus.

"Primary health care is about fundamental change across the entire health care system," Romanow wrote in his final report, released on November 28. "It is about transforming the way the health care system works today-taking away the almost overwhelming focus on hospitals and medical treatments, breaking down the barriers that too frequently exist between health care providers, and putting the focus on consistent efforts to prevent illness and injury, and improve health."

Entitled *Building on Values: The Future of Health Care in Canada*, the report notes that preventing injury and disease would "not only save Canadians money in terms of their future investment in the health care system but also improve health and save lives."

The report is the end result of 18 months of study and consultations. Mr. Romanow makes a total of 47 recommendations, with a total price tag of \$15 billion. The fifth chapter, Primary Health Care and Prevention, deals with preventing injury and illness.

Mr. Romanow notes that health care in Canada has focused predominantly on hospitals and medical treatments "the most invasive and most costly solutions. Primary health care means striking a better balance between efforts to prevent illness and injury and those that cure people when they are sick."

Mr. Romanow recommends that funding to the provinces and territories through his proposed Primary Health Care Transfer be conditional on moving ahead with primary health care. He also recommends a National Summit on Primary Health Care be set up to mobilize action across the country.

Mr. Romanow talks of targeting leading causes of major health problems, including smoking, lack of physical activity, poor diet and alcohol use. And he suggests that the broader determinants of health, such as lifestyle factors, adequate housing, a clean environment and good nutrition have an important impact on the health of individuals and communities, and also hold tremendous potential for improving health and preventing illnesses.

The full report can be downloaded from www.healthcarecommission.ca

Going public for education

Plans are well underway for the 2003 public educators' conference, which is one of the most popular events of the year.

The host for this year's event will be St. Catharines Fire Services in the Niagara region.

The conference will take place on November 20 and 21. A pre-conference workshop will take place on November 19.

Hotel information, registration forms and agenda will be announced later this year.

The event in 2002 took place in Huntsville with more than 200 delegates. Hope to see you all in St. Catharines!

Safety boost

The government introduced a bill that makes booster seats mandatory for young children who have outgrown child car seats but are too small to be fully protected by seat belts.

The requirement is part of the Bill to Enhance Safety and Mobility on Ontario's Roads, 2002, introduced in December last year. Booster seats position the seat belt safely over the child's body to maximize protection in the event of a collision. Booster seats reduce the likelihood that a child will be ejected from a vehicle in a crash.

Pressure mounts for a national injury prevention strategy

Proponents of a national injury prevention strategy are spearheading a letter writing campaign to push for federal government funding and support.

The Insurance Bureau of Canada and SMARTRISK are asking for assistance in the campaign to demonstrate there is support across the country for this important initiative.

In a proposal document, the IBC stated injuries are the leading killer of Canadians under the age of 44.

For every Canadian who dies from an injury a further 200 are seen in emergency rooms. Each year in Canada, 6,000 in-hospital deaths are attributed to injuries; 2,000 children are admitted to hospital every year due to falls from playground equipment; and, 1,233 children would have been saved over a four year period if Canada managed to achieve Sweden's record on preventing child injury deaths.

Injuries account for more than two million days of in-hospital care and \$3.5 billion in rehabilitation services each year.

Draft letters to the Minister of Health, the Prime Minister and Members of Parliament are available on the SmartRisk web site www.smartrisk.ca. For copies of the IBC proposal, visit www.ibc.ca.

Fire safety awards

The 2002 Fire Safety Awards will be presented on June 18 at the Fairmount Royal York Hotel in Toronto.

Nomination forms are being sent out and will need to be submitted to the Fire Marshal's Public Fire Safety Council by April 25, 2003.

The three categories are: Fire Safety Action, Fire Safety Partner and Fire Safety Advocate. First presented in 1988, the awards recognize outstanding contributions to fire and life safety.

Pyrene Corporation, Angus Fire and Kidde Safety Canada are the official sponsors.

For further information, please contact Kathy Paidock, telephone 416-325-3155.

When heroes become smart

Tragically, some young people will never graduate from high school or university, not because they don't have the grades, but because they have lost their lives—in a car crash, a fire, a fall, a drowning. Young people need a lot more than good grades to finish school. They need to be educated about how to recognize the risks they face in their everyday lives, and how to survive by taking smart risks.

The number one cause of death for Canadian teenagers is unintentional injury, or what many people call "accidents." Unintentional injuries kill more teens between the ages of 15 and 19, than meningitis, cancer, and all other causes of death combined.

The real tragedy is that the thousands of Canadian teenagers who are killed or disabled by unintentional injury don't have to lose their lives or their ability to walk. These "accidents" don't just happen. They're predicable and preventable.

That's where SMARTRISK Heroes comes in. It's a one-hour multi-media show, designed to appeal to teenagers, traditionally the toughest audience to impress.

SMARTRISK Heroes doesn't preach. Instead it lets teens know that it is *their choice* to take smart risks through following five simple messages: Buckle Up, Look First, Wear the Gear, Get Trained and Drive Sober.

Created by SMARTRISK, a national non-profit injury prevention organization, the show travels across Canada throughout the school year and has played to about a

million students so far. SMARTRISK Heroes is funded entirely through a combination of user fees and corporate sponsorships by Royal & Sun Alliance Insurance Company of Canada, Ford Motor Company of Canada Ltd, Hydro One, and Fairmont Hotels & Resorts.

Hosted by a survivor of injury, the show features fast-changing video images of young people having fun, interspersed with more sober images of the results of bad choices. The injury survivor talks about how a series of choices landed him or her in a wheel chair and then answers a wide range of questions from the student audience.

Teenagers, teachers, principals, parents and community workers have all said SMARTRISK Heroes works to change attitudes and behaviours toward risk. The program has been evaluated internally and, on two separate occasions by external agencies, most recently by the Metropolitan University at Leeds, U.K.

The Leeds evaluation included tests administered to the students before,



ACTION: *The Heroes show is targeted at young people.*

immediately after, and six weeks after the show; student focus groups; and interviews with teachers and local medical personnel. The overall response to SMARTRISK Heroes was very positive, and the show was demonstrated to be effective in its educational mission. Students reported thinking more about risks, and taking more care about risk and injury. They felt more comfortable saying no to risky behaviours, and reported an increased sense of control in relation to injury prevention.

With the help of these evaluations, SMARTRISK

Heroes was overhauled in time for the 2002-2003 school season. The program is now presented in full-motion DVD and the images and messages have been updated to ensure they still speak to young people. A comprehensive evaluation framework for the entire program was developed along with the new program.

If you would like to investigate booking a SMARTRISK Heroes show for your community, please email smartriskheroes@smartrisk.ca, call Kyle Brooks at 416-596-2703 or visit the web site at www.smartrisk.ca.

Newfoundland bans cell phones for drivers

In December 2002, Newfoundland and Labrador became the first Canadian jurisdiction to ban the use of hand-held cellphones while driving.

The new law will come into effect later this year after an information campaign, administrative preparations and opportunities for drivers to make new arrangements, such as buying hands-free equipment.

Fines for violating the cell phone law will range from \$45 to \$180, along with four demerit points.

An estimated 30 countries have enacted laws banning talking on cell phones while driving. Ontario and Nova Scotia, are considering following suit.

Cash boost for RW

DONATIONS: Tim Horton's donated \$80,000 towards RiskWatch, a program supported by the Fire Marshal's Public Fire Safety Council. The money will buy curriculum in communities that promote Risk Watch.



Fire deaths and injuries tumble

In 2002, the fire death rate in Ontario reached a record low of 7.9 fire deaths per million population with 95 fire deaths.

"Although this reduction is due to a combination of factors, the dedication of injury prevention advocates like the Risk Watch coalitions has contributed significantly," said Fire Marshal Bernard Moyle.

"Some of the credit for this success must also be attributed to the enactment of the *Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997*," he added. "Mandatory public education and prevention, programs and partnerships developed or promoted by the Fire Marshal's Public Fire Safety Council, and effective emergency response by frontline firefighters have all undoubtedly contributed to reduced fire losses."

The fire death rate dropped 43% to a record low between 1997 and 2002 when there were 7.9 fire deaths per million population.

The number of fire deaths is also steadily declining with 95 total fire deaths in 2002

compared to 155 total fire deaths in 1997.

The number of injuries resulting from preventable home fires has dropped by 43% from 78.9 fire injuries per million population in 1997 to 45.1 fire injuries per million population in 2001.

"Although the statistics show a downward trend in the number of fire deaths and injuries, the challenge in the coming years will be to continue to reduce our fire losses through innovative and effective strategies," said Moyle. "Programs like Risk Watch and TAPP-C are making a difference."



Fire Marshal Moyle

Chief for a Day

As part of Fire Prevention Week activities last year, the Fire Marshal's Public Fire Safety Council teamed up with McDonald's restaurants to create a 'Fire Chief for a Day' contest for elementary school children in kindergarten through grade 8.

During Fire Prevention Week, participating McDonald's helped kids learn valuable fire safety lessons through the colourful tray liners in their restaurants. The tray liners had brief fire safety messages and corresponding knowledge-testing questions for kids. Communities without a McDonald's hosted a 'Fire Chief for a Day' contest by distributing fire safety information sheets and ballots through local elementary schools.

Local prize winners were designated the 'Fire Chief for a Day' with the child treated to a host of activities, which included a ride on a fire truck or in the Chief's car; tour of the station; media photo opportunity with the Chief and local dignitaries and lunch at McDonald's.



Chief for a Day: The provincial winner was Kelsey Boisvenue from Wawa, who is pictured, left, with Hawk Junction Fire Chief Laura Lee.

The provincial winner was Grade 2 student Kelsey Boisvenue from Wawa.

Kelsey received a cheque for \$300. The winning fire department was Hawk Junction with Fire Chief Laura Lee. The department received a credit of \$500 from the Council's Distribution Centre.

RiskWatch gathers momentum

Risk Watch, the injury prevention program for elementary school aged children, is continuing to grow in Ontario with the number of schools coming on board increasing.

Since 1998, the number of pupils and the number of teachers has grown at a similar rate with plans to continue the roll-out.

Year	Number of pupils	Number of schools	Number of teachers
2002*	155,575	669	5,938
2001	79,253	331	3,182
2000	45,293	171	1,808
1999	20,650	89	810
1998	3,600	13	123

* These numbers do NOT include the statistics from schools added as a result of the Tim Horton's initiative.

Risk Watch Canadianized

RiskWatch materials are to be revised to include Canadian content as well as French language versions.

The transcreation will be done by SMARTRISK, a national injury prevention organization, which signed an agreement with the Fire Marshal's Public Fire Safety Council. Workbooks, curriculum and brochures will now contain Canadian statistics, measurements, legislation and stories.

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