

Risk Guardian



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Looking out for the kids

Children in the province of Ontario would seem to be in safe hands. Teachers, health care professionals, police officers and firefighters showed their caring side when they got together at the third annual Risk Watch® Champion Training Symposium in Ontario.

The event, held April 6-8 at the Ontario Fire College, gave over 70 participants from nine coalitions the chance to exchange ideas, listen to experts and ask a lot of questions.

The purpose of the weekend was to help get the Risk Watch injury prevention curriculum into schools and to children, preschool through grade eight. It targets the top eight risk areas that kill or injure children every year.

Emphasis was placed on the need for everyone to work together and pool the resources of each profession.

Bill Currie, OPP Deputy Commissioner, stressed to the group the importance of a single umbrella to bring services and programs together.

He added that the police in Ontario were committed to focusing on the proactive side of policing communities with regards to young people and creating programs specific to local communities.

"We will be announcing in May a new strategy for the next five years that will put together a myriad of programs," Mr. Currie said.

Fire Marshal Bernard Moyle reiterated the need for a unified approach to improving child safety in the province.

"Safety is a concern of the entire community. The fire

service cannot do it alone. It takes a village to raise a child — and to keep them safe," said Mr. Moyle.

"Risk Watch is the perfect vehicle to achieve this.

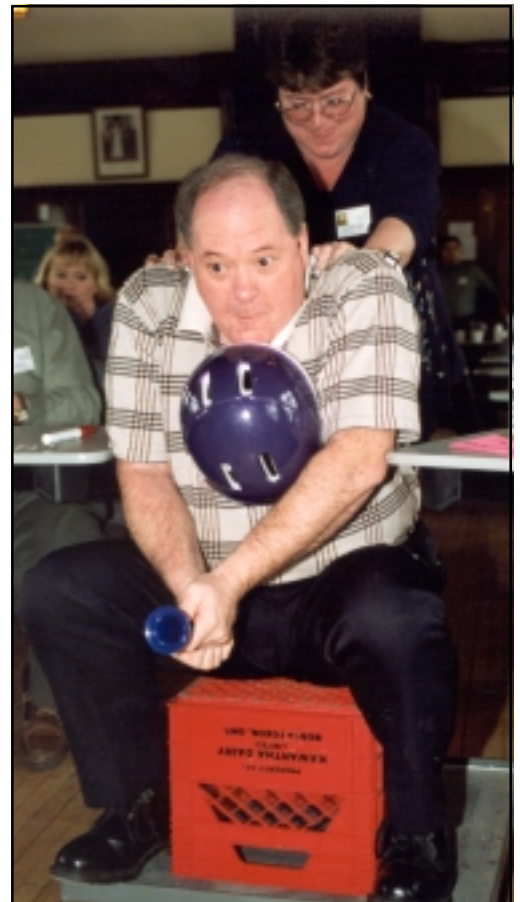
Risk Watch made fire safety part of the bigger picture. It is an umbrella for the police, health service, education professionals and the fire service. It

creates a more safety conscious society,"

he added. "My goal is to have Risk Watch in every elementary school within seven years."

The Fire Marshal acknowledged there were a number of challenges to overcome. "Before we can hope to change the behaviour of the public, we need to change our own behaviour first. The Risk Watch coalitions here today provide a great opportunity for implementing very positive changes in their communities."

The nine coalition teams were from: Caledon, Perth, Kenora, Tecumseh, Windsor, Haldimand, Norwich, Sarnia-Lambton and Whitby.



BEEP BEEP: Workshops on the eight main causes of injury – including vehicle crashes – were part of the Symposium.

**Send your comments and submissions to:
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Coroners' Reports

In their recommendations for preventing future tragedies, coroners' juries in four inquests into Ontario deaths have made mention of the *Risk Watch* program. For example:

That the Risk Watch program is made a mandatory part of the school curriculum for primary and secondary school students in the province (Toronto tragedy- June 2000). That existing programs such as the Risk Watch program be strongly considered by the local Board of Education for introduction into its school curricula as a means of teaching injury prevention (and water safety) to school-aged children (James Bay tragedy- August 2000)

Following the recommendation of a coroner's jury in Oakville, the Halton Catholic District School Board recently committed \$85,000 to implement the Risk Watch program in all 35 of its schools. The fire and burn prevention unit will be mandatory beginning in September 2001 with the other seven risk areas following suit in September, 2002.

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It's time for Risk Watch in Ontario

Photograph highlights from the April 2001 Symposium at the OFC



SAILING: A group of Risk Watch coalition members get involved on a water safety workshop.



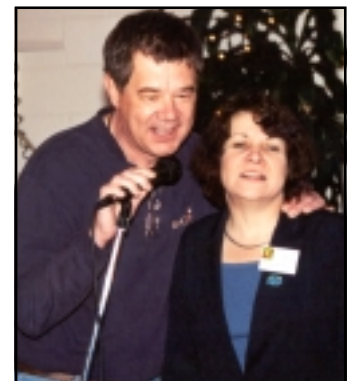
CLASSROOM SKILLS: Back to school for these volunteers.



TEDDY: Hands on workshops.



SONGSTERS: This groups sings out the Risk Watch message.



DUET: The karaoke evening provided a more relaxed atmosphere for the coalitions to meet groups from around the province.

Run for the hills - the Blue Mountains to be more precise!

The Town of the Blue Mountains is hosting the Fire Marshal's Public Fire Safety Council's 10th annual public educators' conference this year.

The two-day event, entitled 'Blue Sky', takes place on November 15-16 at Blue Mountain Inn, Ontario.

The event provides public educators in the fire service with the opportunity to network with colleagues from around the province, listen to leaders in their field and participate in workshops.

"It is a great opportunity for Risk Watch coalitions or representatives to attend. Injury prevention is all about educating people, both children and adults," said Bev Gilbert, one of the organizers and Manager of Public Education & Media Relations at the Office of the Fire Marshal.

The names of speakers and subjects of the breakout groups will be confirmed closer to the date of the conference.

The conference fee is only \$150 (inclusive of tax). This includes two breakfasts, lunch, a banquet and entertainment as well as a pre-conference TAPP-C research and information session on November 14.

Great room rates have also been arranged for attendees - only \$72.80 per night (tax included).

For further information or details on the public educators' conference, please contact Dave Cunliffe, Town of the Blue Mountains Fire Department, telephone (519) 599-5411.



Order Risk Watch goodies (pictured left) online at the Fire Marshal's Public Fire Safety Council web site — www.safecommunities.com or phone 1-866-379-6668.

RISK WATCH REVIVAL

Want to enhance your Risk Watch skills or network with other supporters from across the province? Watch out for the Risk Watch Revival in August 2002. Details will appear in a future issue.

Plan on being there!

Taking a realistic approach works best

Risk Watch provides an opportunity for fire departments to address broader injury prevention issues. Establishing Risk Watch champion coalitions enables the fire service to provide safety partners with a sense of solidarity, credibility, and community outreach.

Before initiating such fire and life safety campaigns, fire departments must take a realistic view of what it takes to implement a program like Risk Watch. Ask these questions:



Brian Ellsworth, Fire & Life Safety Educator

Does your community need Risk Watch?

Focus groups and a simplified risk assessment can help answer this question. Many municipalities *need* and *want* Risk Watch to combat preventable injuries. The Fire Marshal's Public Fire Safety Council's affiliation with NFPA in the Risk Watch effort means that municipal fire departments are often the first source of contact by injury prevention partners. As most fire departments are also the biggest resource in their community, there is an expectation that they will champion the effort.

Do you have the support of your organization?

If your department is not on board with change, you will need to be a 'constant salesperson' to help lead the charge. This can be a very daunting task, but remind yourself of the true reward at the end of the day — the safety of children! A hidden reward is that you will also help your fire service address some of the public education requirements mandated by the Fire Protection and Prevention Act. There has to be a 'buy in' from the fire chief and the whole organization.

Can you forecast obstacles?

Risk Watch is relatively new to Ontario. It addresses changing life safety behaviours that are outside the traditional parameters of the fire service. Change is difficult and you will have to provide support and break down walls while re-building a community of safety partners with equal commitment, status and support. Prepare a simplified business plan that you can use to set achievable targets.

Can you sell Risk Watch?

To spearhead this program, you need to be competent and confident. If you are not one to champion a cause, there is no shame in seeking an appropriate person for this role. The key is to provide a program that benefits all of the coalition members while striving for its ultimate objective — reducing preventable injuries among elementary school children. Championing the Risk Watch program is not a one-person function. Successful coalitions empower their members to have equal input and authority to direct the program.

Constant evaluation and review is required to sustain your program. Build your program slowly. Be realistic. Through diligence, patience and continued community support, you can champion a successful and comprehensive program to benefit many generations of our youth.

Article by Brian Ellsworth, Fire & Life Safety Educator
Halton Hills Fire Department.

Help is online

The Internet is a fantastic way to get invaluable resources that you can use as part of your Risk Watch program. Check out the following sites for lots of free ideas and great information that could help you and your coalition.

- www.riskwatch.org – the official Risk Watch site.
- www.sparky.org – the official site of the NFPA mascot known to children through North America.
- www.nfpa.org – the official NFPA site, which contains additional lesson plans.
- www.edselect.com/safety.htm – reference site for each risk group that advises of the appropriate grade level. Created by Carol Jodouin, the lead resource teacher for the North Bay Risk Watch coalition.
- www.safety-council.org – Canada Safety Council, Canada's voice and resource for safety.
- www.safekidscanada.ca – the national injury prevention program with lots of information on injury prevention for children from the Toronto Hospital for Sick Children.
- www.safecommunities.com – The Fire Marshal's Public Fire Safety Council web site with online ordering and pricing information for Risk Watch curriculum and promotional products.
- www.hc-sc.gc.ca – Health Canada online, check out the Child Injury Division and the back issues of CHIRPP news.
- www.city.brantford.on.ca/firedept – Risk Watch games and puzzles for students to do at home or at school.

We want to hear from you! Send us your suggestions for additional teacher resources — such as books, videos and games — as well as useful web sites, teacher-developed activities and other additional material. Send by email, fax or mail to:

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In March 2000, the OFM established the Ontario Risk Watch Advisory Coalition (ORWAC) to help guide the introduction and implementation of Risk Watch in Ontario.

Richard Morris represents the Fire Marshal's Public Fire Safety Council on the 12-member coalition board.

The Council will continue to support and promote implementation in schools across the province in the interests of fire and life safety and fostering a community culture in Ontario.



SAVING LIVES

Evidence of prevention can be hard to see, especially as it is news of injuries that make the headlines. However, there are three saves in Ontario credited to Risk Watch.

Fort Frances

Seven-year-old Dustin Davis was playing near his home when he came across a gun in the bushes.

Dustin knew what to do when faced with this situation because his second-grade teacher, Randy Kirk, had just taught his class the *Risk Watch* firearms injury prevention lesson a few weeks before.

Dustin left the gun where it was and went to get his father. Mr. Davis notified the police and had them retrieve the firearm.

(This and U.S. saves are documented on the NFPA web site: www.nfpa.org)

Brockville

On a rainy day in early September, 1999 Heidi Kelly ran into a bus while riding her bicycle with her nine-year old son, Daniel.

She had a concussion and received 21 stitches in her head. While she was bruised and lost several teeth, she avoided serious brain damage because she was wearing a bicycle helmet.

"I told my mom you better wear a helmet in case you have an accident," Daniel said. "I handed her the helmet."

Up until this time, Heidi had never worn a helmet although she always made sure that her three children were protected.

She says Daniel saved her

life, thanks to *Risk Watch*, the safety program that is taught in his school.



Ignace

Cody Tardiff performed the Heimlich Maneuver on his friend, Riley, who was choking on a candy.

Cody had not been trained in the maneuver, but had seen it demonstrated as part of a *Risk Watch* lesson that his teacher, Chantal Moore, had taught to the class.

Everyone is very proud of Cody, who benefited from the program by knowing what to do for his friend.

Teachers and others supporting the *Risk Watch* program have one thing to say about the program, "It does save lives!"

Our sincere congratulations to Cody! You knew the right thing to do and you did it!

