

EDITORIAL CONTENT: FIRE PREVENTION WEEK 2002

Three Steps to a Safer Home

Have you ever asked yourself, “Is my home and family safe from fire?” Sadly, for the 101 people who died in residential fires in Ontario last year, the answer was probably “no”. According to statistics from the Office of the Fire Marshal, 85% of all fire deaths occur in the home where people feel most safe and secure.

“No one should ever die in a fire,” said Ontario Fire Marshal Bernard Moyle. “The vast majority of fires can be prevented with good fire safety practices and a little common sense.”

The Fire Marshal urges everyone to take responsibility for fire safety in their own home by following these three simple steps:

- 1. Hunt for home hazards** to prevent fires from happening in the first place. Search out dangers such as matches and lighters left within the reach of children, carelessly discarded cigarettes, objects too close to space heaters, and extension cords used as permanent wiring.
- 2. Install smoke alarms** on every level of your home and outside all sleeping areas. Test your alarms at least once a month and replace the batteries every year, or when the low-battery warning chirps.
- 3. Develop and practice a home escape plan** with your entire family. Everyone in the household must know at least two ways out in the event of a fire. Choose a safe meeting place outside and call the fire department from a neighbour’s home.

These three steps are among the fire safety messages being promoted by fire departments throughout North America during Fire Prevention Week, October 6-12, 2002. This year’s theme, *Team Up for Fire Safety*, encourages the entire community to rally around the cause of fire safety and prevent needless tragedies in the home.

Fire Prevention Week may last only seven days, but fire safety in your home should be a year-long event!

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