

October 3, 2018

Fire Department sounding alarm for Fire Prevention Week

“If I could set off alarm bells to remind people about the dangers of fires, I’d do it,” says fire chief Thomas Doherty. *“With a scary increase in the number of home fires in Campbell River this year, Fire Prevention Week is a good time to turn up the volume on how to prevent and escape fires.”*

Data from Statistics Canada show that between 2005 and 2014, residential fires consistently accounted for roughly six of every 10 structural fires.

“Home is the place people are at greatest risk for fire, yet home is the place people feel safest, which leads to complacency,” Doherty says. *“Because home fires today can burn faster than ever, people may have as little as one or two minutes to escape safely from the time the smoke alarm sounds.”*

Making sure smoke alarms are working, and knowing how to use that time wisely takes planning and practice. To encourage people to take the time to prepare to quickly and safely escape a fire, the City of Campbell River Fire Department and the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) – the official sponsor of Fire Prevention Week for more than 90 years – are promoting this year’s Fire Prevention Week campaign: *Look. Listen. Learn. Be aware. Fire can happen anywhere.*

Throughout October, members of the Campbell River Fire Department will visit local Grade 3 classes to introduce the fire safety house program, reinforcing Fire Prevention Week information.

“Working in the fire service for many years, we know that people often make choices in fire situations that jeopardize their safety or even cost them their lives,” Doherty adds. *“We need to do a better job of teaching people about the potentially life-saving difference escape planning and practice can make and motivating them to action.”*

This year’s *Look. Listen. Learn.* campaign highlights three steps people can take to help quickly and safely escape a fire:

- **Look** for places fire could start.
- **Listen** for the sound of the smoke alarm
- **Learn** two ways out of every room.

These messages apply to any location – not just home fires.

“Situational awareness is a skill people need to use wherever they go,” Doherty says. *“No matter where you are, look for available exits. If the alarm system sounds, take it seriously and exit the building immediately.”*

“While we’ve made significant progress in teaching people how to prevent fires from happening, there’s still much more work to do in terms of educating people about how to protect themselves in the event of one,” adds Lorraine Carli, NFPA’s vice president of Outreach and Advocacy. *“This is particularly critical given the increased speed at which today’s home fires grow and spread.”*

Between 2005 and 2014, cooking equipment and smokers’ material caused approximately six of every 10 residential fires.

For more information about Fire Prevention Week (Oct. 7 through 13) and home escape planning, visit www.firepreventionweek.org.

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