



## The Holidays are Heating Up: Keep Fire in its Place

While the holiday season can be one of the most festive times of the year, it also can be one of the deadliest. Already, nine people have died in fires in Ontario since November 1, 2009.

The fact that these fires occurred in a variety of locations across the province shows that fires can happen anywhere, at anytime. You need to be prepared to protect your family and home.

It's the law in Ontario to have working smoke alarms on every storey and outside all sleeping areas in your home. Installing and maintaining working smoke alarms can provide you with the early warning you need to escape a fire. Failure to comply with the smoke alarm law can result in a ticket for \$235 or a fine of up to \$50,000 for individuals and \$100,000 for corporations.

But the best way to protect your family and home from fire is to prevent one from starting in the first place. The most common causes of home fires during the holidays are careless use of candles and careless cooking. Alcohol is often a contributing factor in these types of fires.

The most common type of cooking fire occurs when cooking is left unattended on the stove. Make sure you always stay in the kitchen when cooking, especially when cooking with oil or at high temperatures. Keep a pot lid near the stove so that if a fire does start, you can slide the lid over the pot to extinguish the fire. Keep combustible materials like plastic utensils and tea towels away from the stove.

Many fire deaths are caused by people cooking or smoking while under the influence of alcohol. Make sure this doesn't happen in your home. Keep a watchful eye on anyone consuming alcohol and maintain working smoke alarms on every storey and outside all sleeping areas of your home.

Remember to always place lit candles out of reach of children and pets, where they can't be knocked over, and away from anything that can burn such as holiday decorations or curtains. Candles should be covered by glass chimneys and kept out of bedrooms. Always snuff out candles before leaving the room or going to bed.

Fire and smoke spread so quickly you may have less than one minute to escape if a fire does start in your home. Everyone in your home must know exactly what to do if the smoke alarms sound. Develop and practice a home fire escape plan with your entire family. Your escape plan should include who will help the very young, older adults or anyone else who may require assistance.

Holiday celebrations can quickly turn to tragedies when you forget to include fire safety in your plans. That is why the Schreiber Fire Department is asking you to consider these simple tips to ensure your family has a safe and happy holiday season.

Pat Bourguignon  
Chief, Schreiber Fire Dept

For more information, contact:  
[fireprevention@schreiber.ca](mailto:fireprevention@schreiber.ca) or call 824-2094