
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General
Emergency Management BC
Office of the Fire Commissioner

Fire Prevention Week emphasizes importance of preparedness

VICTORIA – Fire Prevention Week in B.C. runs from Oct. 6 to 12, 2019. “Not Every Hero Wears a Cape. Plan and Practise Your Escape!” is this year's theme.

Jennifer Rice, Parliamentary Secretary for Emergency Preparedness, acknowledged Fire Prevention Week, alongside a number of partners at the Parliament Buildings in Victoria.

“It’s critical that all British Columbians have an escape plan in the event a fire breaks out in their home,” said Rice. “Emergency preparedness starts at home. B.C.’s annual Fire Prevention Week is the perfect opportunity for everyone to draw a map of their homes, identify two ways out of each room and practise their plan ahead of time. This is just one way people can improve their personal safety and prepare for the unexpected.”

Rice was joined by several provincial partners, whose work to promote fire and burn prevention awareness is crucial in helping save lives and prevent injury in British Columbia. These include the Fire Prevention Officers’ Association of BC, the BC Professional Fire Fighters’ Burn Fund, FortisBC, the First Nations’ Emergency Services Society, the Fire Chiefs’ Association of BC, the BC Fire Training Officers’ Association and the Office of the Fire Commissioner.

“Preparing in advance of an emergency, like a fire, is one of the most critical components of staying safe,” said T.M. Sandulak, manager, emergency management and business continuity programs, FortisBC. “Part of our commitment to safety means we make sure our customers are informed on what to do in an emergency situation, as well as providing training for first responders to help them stay safe when approaching situations involving natural gas or electricity.”

This year’s theme is about recognizing the unassuming but heroic efforts of everyday people who take the important steps to keep themselves, their families and their loved ones safe from fire. Fire Prevention Week is a great time for all British Columbians to test smoke alarms, review and practise escape plans, hold fire drills and acquire functioning extinguishers.

“The First Nations Emergency Services Society of BC is pleased to be working on Fire Prevention Week initiatives with the Province of B.C. and provincial fire prevention organizations,” said Liz Wilson, fire services officer. “We are promoting the Fire Prevention Week 2019 fire and burn prevention poster and video contest to schools in Indigenous communities throughout B.C.”

Quick Facts:

- In British Columbia, the top causes of fire in the home are cooking equipment, matches/lighters, heating equipment and smoker’s material.

- According to statistics reported to the Office of the Fire Commissioner, 97 fatalities occurred in the past five years due to a structure fire, and in 43 % of these cases, there was no working smoke alarm.
- According to statistics reported to the Office of the Fire Commissioner, in the past five years, 75% of apartment fires occurred in buildings of four or fewer storeys.
- Home escape planning and practice ensure that everyone knows what to do in a fire and is prepared to escape quickly and safely.
- Today's homes burn faster than ever and may allow as few as two minutes to escape safely from the time the smoke alarm sounds.
- A closed door may slow the spread of smoke, heat and fire.
- It is recommended that everyone install smoke alarms inside every sleeping room and outside each separate sleeping area, and ensure there are alarms on every level of the home.

Learn More:

Link to poster and video contest: <https://burnfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Burn-Prevention-Week-Poster-1.pdf>

Office of the Fire Commissioner: www.gov.bc.ca/FireSafety/FirePreventionWeek

Official Fire Prevention Week proclamation:
<http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/proclamations/proclamations/FirePrevWk2019>

BC Professional Fire Fighters' Burn Fund: <https://burnfund.org>

Fire Prevention Officers' Association of BC: <http://fpoa.bc.ca>

Fire Chiefs' Association of BC: <https://fcabc.ca>

First Nations' Emergency Services Society: <https://fness.bc.ca>

BC Fire Training Officers' Association: <https://www.bcftoa.com>

FortisBC: <https://www.fortisbc.com>

National Fire Protection Association: <https://www.nfpa.org/fpw>

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