

Fire Chief Urges Residents to Install Smoke Alarms and Practice Home Fire Escape Plans

ROCKWOOD, Ontario, August 15, 2014 - In the wake of a fatal fire in Ottawa on Wednesday, August 13, 2014, the Guelph/Eramosa Fire Department wants to remind the public that once you have escaped from a burning building you should not re-enter for any reason.

“Once out, stay out. Never re-enter a burning building.” said Deputy Chief Richard Renaud noting that an individual in the recent Ottawa fire had safely exited a burning home but returned in a fatal attempt to save a pet.

Early detection and warning of fire is also critical and that is why the law requires smoke alarms to be installed on every storey of your home and outside all sleeping areas. “Just as important as having working smoke alarms is making sure everyone in your home knows exactly what to do to escape BEFORE a fire occurs,” continued Deputy Chief Renaud.

Simple steps for home fire escape planning include:

- Everyone should know two ways out of each room, if possible.
- All exits must be unobstructed and easy to use.
- If someone in your home has a disability, develop an escape plan with your household that takes into account their unique needs. Determine who will be responsible for helping young children, older adults and anyone who needs assistance to escape.
- Choose a meeting place outside, such as a tree or a lamp post, where everyone can be accounted for.
- Call the fire department from outside the home, from a cell phone or neighbour’s home.
- Practice your home fire escape plan.
- Once out, stay out. Never re-enter a burning building.

For people who live in apartment buildings and need assistance to escape:

- Make sure you tell the superintendent or landlord if you need assistance.
- Make sure your name is added to the persons who require assistance list in the fire safety plan, so the fire department knows which apartment you are in.
- Know the emergency procedures outlined in the building’s fire safety plan.

If a fire occurs in your home and you are unable to escape:

- Close the door of the room you are in and cover vents and cracks around the door with cloth or tape to keep smoke out.
- Call 9-1-1 or your fire department. Tell them where you are, then signal for help at the window with a light-coloured cloth or a flashlight.

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