

Spring & Summer Fire Safety Tips!

In The House

- Test your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, change batteries immediately if needed. For more information check out our section on smoke alarm maintenance & carbon monoxide detector maintenance.
- Check your fire extinguishers. For more information, check our section on fire extinguisher information.
- Check for overloaded or damaged extension cords, replace where needed.
- Ensure you have an emergency preparedness kit in case of incidents such as power outages and flooding.
- Practice your family's fire escape plan so everyone knows what to do in case of an emergency
- Windows should be checked to ensure they open and close properly, in case they are needed as an exit
- Properly store household chemicals and never mix cleaning agents
- Recycle: Get rid of old newspapers, magazines and junk mail. These items tend to pile up and can greatly contribute to the severity and spread of fire.
- Check and clean filters above stove.
- Pull refrigerator out and vacuum or dust the coils.
- Always keep stairs and landings clear for safe evacuation in event of an emergency.

Around the house

- Make sure your address numbers are up and visible from the street.
- Maintain a clear 'fire zone' of 10' around structures.
- Check outdoor electrical outlets and other electrical appliances for animal nests and to ensure proper wiring.
- Keep 100' of garden hose with an attached nozzle connected and ready for use.
- Remove leaves and trash from carports and garages: Combustible materials are dangerous if they are exposed to heated automobile components, especially under the vehicle.
- Clean up and properly store paints, pool and yard chemicals.
- Check fuels containers for leaks and make sure they are properly stored.
- Let power equipment sit for approximately 30 minutes before placing it inside to be sure there is no possibility of fire.
- Some municipalities do not allow open air burning. Always check with your local fire department for questions, instructions and permits.

BBQ Tips

- All barbeque grills must only be used outdoors — using grills indoors or in enclosed spaces is not only a fire hazard, but it exposes occupants to toxic gasses and potential asphyxiation.
- Always position the grill well away from combustible objects — buildings, fences, deck railings and landscaping can easily and quickly ignite.
- Get your grill cleaned and serviced. Check all propane tanks and lines for leaks and damage.
- Never leave a lit grill unattended.
- Always use long handled grilling utensils and heat resistant oven mitts to avoid exposure burns from heat and flames.
- Periodically remove grease build-up in catch trays to prevent it from igniting.
- Keep a garden hose nearby, connected and ready for use in case of a fire.
- The Fire Service in Ontario wants to ensure you have an enjoyable and safe summer. Below are some general fire safety tips that will help your family enjoy all that summer can offer.
- For more detailed safety tips, please click on one of the links below
- Do not allow children to get near fireworks, stoves, or grills. Make sure that all flammable and combustible materials are out of their reach. Never allow them to play with matches, candles, or lighters.
- Bring a fire extinguisher or fire blanket to your outdoor trip. This way, you can easily extinguish fire before it grows out of hand. Fire accidents can happen anytime and it always pays to be prepared.
- Before you use a grill, check first the connection between the propane tank and fuel line to see if this is not blocked. See to it that you do not overfill the propane tank.
- Douse hot coals with plenty of water before disposing of them. Never put them inside plastic, paper or wooden trash bins or containers.
- During picnics or camping trips, avoid building campfires. If you do build one, make sure you keep it small and that you douse it with water to put it out completely. Never leave the camping area without putting out the campfire. Check with your local fire department, municipality or Ministry of Natural Resource to ensure there is not a fire ban in effect.
- Inspect fire equipment at home. Ensure your fire extinguisher is in top condition. If you see anything suspicious like a leak in the nozzle, have it repaired or checked by a professional immediately.
- Double check plugs and switches at home before you leave. If you are going on a trip or picnic at be sure that everything is unplugged and turned off before you leave the house.
- Formulate an escape route for the house or cottage. Practice fire drills regularly at least twice a year. Leave emergency numbers near the telephone.
- Use barbecue grills away from the house, from the tent, or from anything that can easily catch fire.
- When checking in at a hotel, B&B, motel or renting a seasonal property, do not forget to consider the fire safety of the place. Examine if there are fire exits, firefighting equipment, working smoke detectors and clear signage of the escape route.
- When using a lawnmower, never fuel it while it is still hot. Give it a few minutes to cool down.

- If outside and your clothes catch fire, use the **STOP, DROP** and **ROLL** method. Use a fire extinguisher to put out a small fire that is not yet spreading. Call the fire department immediately.

Seasonal Property Fire Safety

This includes but is not limited to cottages, cabins, motorhomes / RV's, boats & houseboats etc.

- Test smoke alarms at least monthly or each time you return to your seasonal home. Pack a new smoke alarm and extra smoke alarm batteries in case they need replacement.
- Install and ensure carbon monoxide alarms in your seasonal home if it has a fuel-burning appliance.
- Develop and practice a home fire escape plan to ensure everyone knows what to do if the smoke alarm sounds.
- Know the telephone number for the local fire department and your seasonal home's emergency sign number, in case of emergency.
- Clean barbecues before using them. Keep an eye on lit barbecues and ensure all combustibles, as well as children and pets are kept well away from them. Fires can happen when barbecues are left unattended.
- Keep barbecue lighters and matches out of sight and reach of children.
- Remember to bring a flashlight with extra batteries.
- Check heating appliances and chimneys before using them.
- Check with your local fire department, municipality, or Ministry of Natural Resources to determine whether open air burning is permitted before having a campfire or burning brush. If open burning is allowed, fires should be built on bare soil or on exposed rock. Remove leaves and twigs from around the fire to keep it from spreading. Always keep a bucket of water, sand, or even a shovel close by and supervise the fire at all times.
- If you must smoke, do so outside. Keep a large can with water nearby so cigarette butts can be safely discarded. If you drink, do so responsibly. Tobacco use and excessive alcohol consumption are contributing factors in many fires and can lead to serious injuries.
- Burn candles in sturdy candleholders that will not tip and are covered with a glass shade. When you go out, blow out!

Fireworks Safety:

- To minimize the risk of fire and burn injury, the fire service does not recommend family fireworks or informal neighbourhood displays.
- The fire service recommends attending public fireworks displays hosted by your municipality or other responsible organization.
- If you still choose to have a family fireworks or an informal neighbourhood display, check with your local fire department about regulations regarding fireworks. Here are some important safety tips to be followed:
 - Appoint a responsible person to be in charge. Only adults who are aware of the hazards and essential safety precautions should handle and discharge fireworks.
 - Carefully read and follow the label directions on fireworks packaging.
 - Always keep a water hose or pail of water close by when discharging fireworks.
 - Discharge fireworks well away from combustible materials like buildings, trees and dry grass.
 - Keep onlookers a safe distance away, upwind from the area where fireworks are discharged.
 - Light only one firework at a time and only when they are on the ground. Never try to light a firework in your hand or re-light dud fireworks. For dud fireworks, it is best to wait 30 minutes and soak them in a bucket of water. Dispose of them in a metal container.
 - Discharge fireworks only if wind conditions do not create a safety hazard.
 - Keep sparklers away from children. Sparklers burn extremely hot and can ignite clothing, cause blindness and result in severe burns. As the sparkler wire remains hot for some minutes after burnout, it should be immediately soaked in water to avoid injury.
 - If someone gets burned, run cool water over the wound for three to five minutes and seek medical attention, if necessary.

Campfire Safety Tips

All it takes is one spark for things to go wrong. A carelessly abandoned campfire or a campfire built without safe clearance can turn a small fire into a dangerous and fast-moving blaze. Be sure to build your campfire in a way that does not endanger anyone or the surrounding forest. Enjoy a safe campfire by following these campfire safety tips:

- Check with local authorities on open-air burning restrictions and follow local burning regulations. Keep up-to-date on fire bans in the area.
- Never build a campfire on a windy day. Sparks or embers from the fire could travel quite a distance setting an unintentional fire.
- Watch the wind direction to ensure sparks aren't getting on flammable materials. Put the fire out if wind changes begin to cause concern
- Build campfires where they will not spread; well away from tents, trailers, dry grass, leaves, overhanging tree branches or any other combustible.
- Build campfires in fire pits provided or on bare rock or sand, if no fire pit is provided.
- Maintain a 2 to 3.5 metre (6 – 10 foot) clearance around your campfire.

- Build a campfire surround with rocks to contain your campfire. Be aware that rocks obtained from the river may explode due to moisture in the rock becoming superheated by the campfire.
- Use crumpled paper and/or kindling to start a fire rather than using flammable liquids.
- Never use gasoline as an aid to starting a campfire. If a fire starter is required, use only proper lighting fluid and use the lighting fluid sparingly. NEVER PUT IT ON AN OPEN FLAME since the fire can ignite the stream of lighting fluid and the flame will travel up the stream igniting the container in your hand and causing serious injury. Once the lighting fluid has been applied to the firewood, allow a few minutes for the explosive vapours to disperse before lighting. Remove the lighting fluid container a safe distance away before lighting the campfire.
- Secure all lighters and matches and keep them out of children's reach.
- Keep campfires to a small, manageable size no more than 1 metre (3 feet) high by 1 metre (3 feet) in diameter and don't let it get out of hand.
- Don't burn garbage in your campfire. The smell is unpleasant for you and your neighbours, and may attract animals to your campsite.
- Keep all combustible materials, including flammable liquids, propane cylinders, lighting fluid, etc. away from the campfire.
- Stack extra wood upwind and away from the campfire so that sparks from the campfire cannot ignite your woodpile. Have sufficient wood on hand to eliminate the need to leave your campsite to restock.
- Never leave campfires unattended. Ensure that a responsible adult is monitoring the campfire at all times. Supervise children around campfires at all times and never allow horseplay near or involving the campfire, such as jumping over a campfire. Do not allow children to run around near a campfire.
- Closely supervise children while roasting treats over a campfire. A flaming marshmallow can easily ignite a child's clothing. A heated metal skewer can be a burn hazard, as well as a puncture hazard.
- Loose clothing can easily catch fire. Never reach into a campfire to rearrange pieces of wood.
- Teach children how to STOP, DROP and ROLL should their clothing catch on fire. Teach children to cool a burn with cool running water for 3 – 5 minutes.
- Keep plenty of water and a shovel around to douse the fire when you're done. Use caution when applying water to the campfire. Once the water has been applied, stir the dampened coals and douse it again with water. As an added precaution, shovel sand or dirt to cover the dampened coals to smother any remaining embers.
- As little as 1 second contact with a 70°C (158°F) campfire can cause 3rd degree, full thickness burns.
- The average campfire can get as hot as 500°C (932°F) in as little as 3 hrs.
- The majority of children are burned the morning after a fire from coming into contact with hot ashes or embers.
- A campfire left to burn itself out or put out with sand only, was still 100°C (212°F) eight hours later. The buried coals and embers retain their heat underground like an oven. There is also a risk that the fire may spontaneously re-ignite. A child may mistake the pile of sand or dirt as a sand castle and attempt to play in it. The temperature, less than 10 cm (4") below the surface of the sand or dirt can be as high as 300 °C (572°F).

- A campfire put out with water is reduced to 50°C (122°F) within 10 minutes of applying the water and reduced to 10°C (50°F) after 8 hrs. **The safest way to extinguish a campfire is with water.**

Storm/Natural Disaster Safety Tips

Natural disasters can have a devastating effect on you and your home. Use the following safety tips to help protect yourself, your family and your home from the potential threat of fire during or after a summer storm. You can greatly reduce your chances of becoming a fire casualty by being able to identify potential hazards and following the outlined safety tips.

Some Types of Fire-Related Hazards Present During and After a Summer Storm

- Lightning associated with thunderstorms generates a variety of fire hazards. The power of lightning's electrical charge and intense heat can electrocute on contact, splitting trees and causing fires.
- Pools of water and even appliances can be electrically charged.
- Appliances that have been exposed to water can short and become a fire hazard.
- Generators are often used during power outages. Generators that are not properly used and maintained can be very hazardous.

Chemical Safety

- Look for combustible liquids like gasoline, lighter fluid, and paint thinner that may have spilled. Thoroughly clean the spill and place containers in a well-ventilated area.
- Keep combustible liquids away from heat sources.

Electrical Safety

- If your home has sustained flood or water damage, and you can safely get to the main breaker or fuse box, turn off the power.
- Assume all wires on the ground are electrically charged. This includes cable TV feeds.
- Be aware of and avoid downed utility lines. Report downed or damaged power lines to the utility company or emergency services.
- Remove standing water, wet carpets and furnishings. Air dry your home with good ventilation before restoring power.
- Have a licensed electrician check your home for damage.

Gas Safety

- Smell and listen for leaky gas connections. If you believe there is a gas leak, immediately leave the house and leave the door(s) open.
- Never strike a match. Any size flame can spark an explosion.
- Before turning the gas back on, have the gas system checked by a professional.

Generator Safety

- Follow the manufacturer's instructions and guidelines when using generators.
- Use a generator or other fuel-powered machines outside the home. CO fumes are odourless and can quickly overwhelm you indoors.
- Use the appropriate sized and type power cords to carry the electric load. Overloaded cords can overheat and cause fires.
- Never run cords under rugs or carpets where heat might build up or damage to a cord may go unnoticed.
- Never connect generators to another power source such as power lines. The reverse flow of electricity or 'backfeed' can electrocute an unsuspecting utility worker.

Heating Safety

- Kerosene heaters may not be legal in your area and should only be used where approved by authorities.
- Do not use the kitchen oven range to heat your home. In addition to being a fire hazard, it can be a source of toxic fumes.
- Alternative heaters need their space. Keep anything combustible at least 3 feet away.
- Make sure your alternative heaters have 'tip switches.' These 'tip switches' are designed to automatically turn off the heater in the event they tip over.
- Only use the type of fuel recommended by the manufacturer and follow suggested guidelines.
- Never refill a space heater while it is operating or still hot.
- Refuel heaters only outdoors.
- Make sure wood stoves are properly installed, and at least 3 feet away from combustible materials. Ensure they have the proper floor support and adequate ventilation.
- Use a glass or metal screen in front of your fireplace to prevent sparks from igniting nearby carpets, furniture or other combustible items.

And Remember...

- Always use a flashlight - not a candle - for emergency lighting.
- Some smoke alarms may be dependent on your home's electrical service and could be inoperative during a power outage. Check to see if your smoke alarm uses a back-up battery and install a new battery at least once a year.
- Smoke alarms should be installed on every level of your home and inside and outside of sleeping areas.
- All smoke alarms should be tested monthly. All batteries should be replaced with new ones at least once a year.
- If there is a fire hydrant near your home, keep it clear of debris for easy access by the fire department.

RV / Motorhome Fire Safety Tips

Whether camping, partying or just relaxing in your RV, fire safety is essential. It is critical that every member of your party know what to do in an emergency or fire. If you are one of the millions of recreational vehicle (RV) enthusiasts who love to take to the road and explore this great country of ours, ensure your family's safety while travelling in your RV by following these fire safety guidelines.

- **In an emergency, please make sure we can find you – SECONDS DO COUNT!** When travelling in an RV, it's crucial to know your location so emergency responders can find you in the event of an emergency. Be aware of your location and surroundings.
- Confirm the local emergency numbers for police, fire and ambulance – is 911 service available in the area?
- Most campgrounds are in more remote areas that may not provide cell phone coverage. Check your cell phone coverage.
- When you call 911 from a regular land phone line emergency services receive enhanced 911 data indicating the address and municipality of where the call is originating, should the caller be unable to provide this information. This enhanced 911 data is not available for cell phone calls, so ensuring everyone knows the exact location in the event of an emergency is critical in obtaining a timely response from emergency services.
- When vacationing in an isolated area, keep in mind that help from emergency services may be some distance away. It's vitally important that you eliminate your risk from fire and have a fire escape plan in place that everyone is familiar with and has practised. Have at least two escape routes – one in the front and one in the rear of the RV. Test all escape windows, hatches and door latches for smooth operation and keep all escape windows, hatches and doors clear of any obstructions. As soon as they are old enough, teach children how to open escape hatches and emergency exits and have them practise. [LINK TO ESCAPE PLAN REQUIREMENTS](#). Fire Escape Plan Guidelines
- The first rule of RV firefighting is to save lives first and property second. Get yourself and your family to safety before attempting to extinguish any fire. Only if you can do so without endangering yourself or others should you use firefighting aids on hand. Re-emphasize to everyone aboard that objects can be replaced, people can't! Never re-enter a burning RV to retrieve anything – **GET OUT & STAY OUT!**
- Install and maintain at least one [smoke alarm](#) in your RV near the sleeping area. Special 12v smoke alarms, designed specifically for RVs, are available from specialized retailers. Depending on the size of your RV and placement of sleeping areas, more than one smoke alarm may be required.
- Install and maintain at least one [carbon monoxide alarm](#) in your RV near the sleeping area. Special 12v carbon monoxide alarms, designed specifically for RVs, are available from specialized retailers. Be aware that residential style carbon monoxide alarms that plug directly into the electrical outlet require 110v power and would only work and sound an alarm when your RV is plugged into an electrical source at a campground, but would not function when you are on the road or operating off of your 12v battery supply. Consider that some low cost detectors cause

false alarms, so be sure to obtain a quality unit. Do not select a detector just on its cost. It may not be adequate to do the job that is necessary when the time comes.

- Install a propane leak alarm at floor level, no more than 6 inches above the floor or lowest level to alert you in the event of a propane leak. Propane gas, like gasoline fumes, tends to pool in low-lying spots and even a small spark can ignite it. If you have a leak, immediately evacuate the area and shut off the propane at the tank, if it is safe to do so.
- Ensure that all travellers in the RV know what the sound of each type of alarm indicates and what to do when they hear it.
- Test all [smoke alarms](#), [carbon monoxide alarms](#) and propane leak alarms weekly when the RV is in use.
- Install a fully charged [multi-purpose or ABC fire extinguisher](#) in a visible, easily accessible location near an exit where escape is also an option. Make sure everyone knows where it is and how to use it. If you already have a fire extinguisher installed, check the pressure gauge to ensure it's fully charged, indicated by the needle in the green area. A partially discharged fire extinguisher is always considered an empty one – have it refilled or replaced immediately. Also keep in mind that the dry chemical inside the extinguisher tends to pack down in the bottom of the extinguisher over time, which may make it ineffective. Once a month pick up the fire extinguisher, check the gauge or pin for pressure, turn it upside down and hit the bottom sharply with your hand, then shake it well. This should dislodge any compacted dry chemical inside the extinguisher. Most fire extinguishers have a lifespan of 5 to 15 years.
- Most residential fire extinguishers discharge in 8-10 seconds with a range of only 2 – 3.5 metres (6'–10'). They should only be used to extinguish small, contained fires or to reduce a fire sufficiently to allow escape.
- Remember, **DON'T FIGHT A FIRE** unless you call the fire department first! A fire extinguisher is no substitute for the fire department.
- Ensure family members know [how to use the extinguishers and understand which extinguishers are effective on what types of fires](#).
- Have your fuel-burning appliances checked at the beginning of each camping season to ensure they are properly vented, free of any obstructions such as cobwebs, birds nests, etc., and working well.
- Gas cylinders, pipes, fittings and connections should be checked regularly, particularly after driving on bumpy roads, which may loosen connections.
- Only a certified propane fitter may legally install or remove propane piping, tubing equipment and appliances in an RV. Be sure to look for approved products bearing the Canadian Gas Association (CGA), Canadian Standards Association (CSA) or Underwriters' Laboratory of Canada (ULC) logos on the rating plate of new appliances.
- Maintain the RV's mechanical systems, such as radiator hoses, fuel lines, brake systems, transmission, etc., in good working order to eliminate the risk of any leaks or malfunctions that may result in a fire.
- Ensure that the extension cord for connecting your RV to a campground's 110v electricity supply is in good condition and of suitable gauge wire to handle the electrical load placed upon it. Damaged extension cords must be replaced immediately.
- Check all electrical appliances for frayed cords and any other visible

- Electrical generators produce exhaust gasses, which contain carbon monoxide. It is important to have the exhaust pipes extend sufficiently past the side walls or rear of the RV so that prevailing air currents can disperse this lethal gas away from the vehicle and not have it drawn back into an open window on the RV.
- Ensure that you allow the generator to cool down before refuelling. Always shut off the generator and any other fuel-burning appliances
- Driving with propane on can add to the danger if you are involved in an accident or have a fire. Shut off the propane at the tank and turn off all propane-powered appliances while driving. Operate your refrigerator on 12v battery power or simply leave it turned off. Most refrigerators will keep food cold or frozen for several hours, even when turned off.
- When refuelling the propane tanks or the RV's fuel tank it is important to shut off all interior burners, pilot lights, appliances, automatic ignition switches, as well as the RV's motor and have all passengers exit the vehicle.
- Propane cylinders, relief valves and regulating equipment must be located either outside the vehicle, or in a compartment gas-tight to the interior to allow any possible leaks to flow to the outside air. Keep propane cylinders outside unless a properly designed storage compartment has been fitted on your RV.
- Propane cylinders should not be mounted on the roof of an RV. Propane cylinders mounted on the back of the RV pose a hazard in the event of a rear-end collision unless substantial protection to the tank is provided.
- Show all travellers how to shut off propane valves and how to unhook 110v electrical supply cord, should either be required in an emergency.
- Store all flammable liquids, including small disposable propane cylinders outside of the RV.
- Whenever using the stove in your RV, open an overhead vent or turn on the exhaust fan and open a window a small amount to allow fresh air in and carbon monoxide gases out
- The stove should never be used to heat the interior of the RV.
- Never leave cooking unattended.
- Store all clothes, linens and other combustibles well away from the kitchen area. In the compact kitchens in RVs combustibles such as paper towels and curtains are likely to be closer to the stove, so exercise even greater caution than you do at home when cooking in your RV.
- Keep all lighters and matches safely out of the reach of children.
- Leave plenty of clearance between your propane lamp or lantern and any combustible materials. Follow the manufacturer's recommendations for space clearance. Select a level surface on which to place the lamp or lantern. Ensure you have adequate ventilation whenever using a propane-powered appliance.
- A lantern is not a space heater. Use it only as a light source. Always detach the propane cylinder before transporting a lantern and secure the cylinder in a vertical, upright position.
- Recreational travellers to the United States should be aware that effective April 1, 2002 many states in the United States have adopted a requirement that all propane cylinders with a capacity from 4 to 40 pounds must have an [Overfill Protection Device \(OPD\)](#). All propane cylinders without an OPD are prohibited from being refilled by anyone. The OPD serves as a safety shut-off device and prevents overfilling of propane cylinders to avert propane release, fire and possible injury. Propane cylinders equipped with an OPD have the letters "OPD" stamped on the valve

hand wheel and on the side of the valve. Most propane cylinders with a triangular valve wheel have an OPD. Propane cylinders with a round or star-shaped valve wheel usually do not have an OPD. Canadian provinces have not yet adopted the requirement for OPD devices on propane cylinders in order to refill the cylinder. (NFPA 58, Section 2.3.1.5, the LP-Gas Code)

- Establish safe campfire rules to be followed when camping.

Prevention is the best way to fight a fire!