

Spotlight on Health and Safety

Kristy Shilka, PRSD Health & Safety Coordinator

FIRE PREVENTION

How we respond when that alarm sounds can make the difference between life and death.

Preparedness and proactive prevention is the key to avoiding tragic fires that happen because of a lack of understanding and unsafe attitudes and behaviours. So many fires are preventable and teaching children about fire safety and setting a good example can help avoid tragedies.

We should all be familiar with the location and operation of fire-fighting equipment and ensure it is maintained regularly. Smoke alarms are the best tool for safety and research shows that “properly installed and working smoke alarms can cut the chances of dying in a fire in half”¹. It is recommended that smoke alarms be checked each month and replaced every ten years.

Make sure that everyone knows exactly what to do when the alarm sounds and if there is smoke or a fire. A good escape plan always has two exits that are kept clear. Practice your plan at least twice a year, in the daytime and at night to ensure heavy sleepers awaken and to be prepared for a potentially scary situation in a calm and safe manner. For more information about fire safety and escape planning, visit www.3minutedrill.alberta.ca.

“Kitchen fires continue to be the number one cause of home fires”² and can be avoided by following safe cooking practices. Obey ‘No Smoking’ signs, watch for frayed electrical cords and overloaded circuits, store combustibles in a safe area and never leave heat sources or open flames unattended. Remember to maintain furnaces, fireplaces, wood-burning stoves and electric heaters. Stop fire before it starts!

^{1 2} The Office of the Fire Commissioner provides public education, <http://www.ofc.alberta.ca/public-education>