



BWG Fire says: “Look. Listen. Learn.”

Residents encouraged to learn how to safely escape a home fire during Fire Prevention Week 2018

Bradford West Gwillimbury, ON (September 28, 2018) – Home fires today can burn faster than ever. Occupants may have as little as one to two minutes to escape safely from the time the smoke alarm sounds. Knowing how to use that time wisely takes planning and practice.

Bradford West Gwillimbury Fire and Emergency Services (BWGFES) is teaming up with the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) – the official sponsor of Fire Prevention Week for more than 90 years – to promote this year’s Fire Prevention Week campaign: “Look. Listen. Learn. Be aware. Fire can happen anywhere.” The campaign works to educate the public about basic but essential ways to quickly and safely escape a home fire. Fire Prevention Week takes place this year from October 7 through 13.

Data from Statistics Canada show that the number of structure fires declined by 26 per cent between 2005 and 2014. However, residential fires consistently accounted for roughly six of every 10 structural fires during that period. According to StatsCan, cooking equipment and smokers’ material caused approximately six of every 10 residential fires.

“These numbers show that while we’ve made significant progress in teaching people how to prevent fires from happening, there’s still much more work to do in terms of educating the public about how to protect themselves in the event of one,” said Lorraine Carli, NFPA’s vice president of Outreach and Advocacy. “This is particularly critical given the increased speed at which today’s home fires grow and spread.”

Carli notes that home is the place people are at greatest risk for fire, but home is the place people feel safest. That over-confidence contributes to complacency toward home-escape planning and practice.

“Working in the fire service for many years, we know that people often make choices in fire situations that jeopardize their safety or even cost them their lives,” said Andrew McPherson, Fire Prevention Inspector with BWGFES. “We need to do a better job of teaching people about the potentially life-saving difference escape planning and practice can make and motivating them to action.”

Inspector McPherson says this year’s “Look. Listen. Learn.” campaign highlights three steps people can take to help quickly and safely escape a fire:

- Look for places fire could start.
- Listen for the sound of the smoke alarm
- Learn two ways out of every room.

While NFPA and BWGFES are focusing on home fires, these messages apply to virtually any location.

“Situational awareness is a skill people need to use wherever they go,” said Inspector McPherson. “No matter where you are, look for available exits. If the alarm system sounds, take it seriously and exit the building immediately.”

The BWG Fire Department is hosting a series of events in support of this year’s Fire Prevention Week campaign including its annual Open House at the fire station located at 75 Melbourne Drive on Thursday, October 11th from 5:00 pm to 9:00 pm. Additionally, the McDonald’s restaurant located at 468 Holland Street West will be hosting Coffee with a Firefighter from 10:00 am to noon on Friday, October 12.

For more information about Fire Prevention Week and home escape planning, visit www.firepreventionweek.org.

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