



## FIRE SAFETY AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Residents should follow the important safety and preparedness advice below.

### **Carbon Monoxide**

Carbon monoxide is an invisible, odourless gas that can quickly kill you. Have your furnace and chimneys cleaned and inspected and install a carbon monoxide alarm. Check your chimney regularly for signs of damage or corrosion. Have all chimneys inspected to prevent a build-up of deadly carbon monoxide. Don't forget, camping stoves and vehicles emit carbon monoxide. Proper ventilation is the most effective way to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.

### **Home Heating**

Protect your family against fire and deadly carbon monoxide. Have your heating system examined by a qualified service technician. Allow ashes from your wood stove or fireplace to cool before emptying them into a metal container with a tight fitting lid. Keep the container outside. All other forms of temporary heating sources should be used only after reading the instructions and following the manufacturer's advice.

### **Candles**

Candles are a common cause of home fires. Keep lit candles safely away from children and pets. When you go out, blow out candles immediately. Never leave them burning unattended. Traditional wax candles should only be used if battery powered candles are unavailable. Use a flashlight or other source of illumination before using candles or any type of light source with open flames.

### **Barbeques**

Never use a barbeque indoors. When lighting a propane barbeque, open the lid and strike your match or lighter before turning on the gas. When lighting charcoal units, use only approved ignition sources. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions for the safe maintenance of barbeques.

### **Doorways and Windows**

As snow begins to accumulate this time of year, individuals should ensure that windows and doorways are clear. When a fire occurs, you may need a way to escape an apartment or home that may otherwise be obstructed. When an emergency occurs, it's too late.

### **Dryer and Propane Fire Place Vents**

Homeowners are discouraged against using dryers if at all possible during the recovery period from a power outage. If use is essential, individuals should pay particular attention to whether or not the vents associated with appliances and dryers are clear and free of snow. In addition, propane fire place vents should be clear of snow and debris, too. It is essential that these units be able to work properly, not to cause a fire.

## **Electrical Safety**

Avoid overloading a circuit with multi-outlet additions. If additional outlets or circuits are required, have them installed by a licensed electrician. Heavy appliances should be plugged directly into an outlet. If this is not possible, use a 14 gauge three-wire grounding-type appliance extension cord. Never put electrical cord under floor mats or next areas where water may be present. Electricity conservation should be at the forefront of everyone's attention year-round as well.

## **Smoke Alarms**

Working smoke alarms are required by law to be installed in all sleeping areas and each level of a dwelling. Batteries should be checked regularly. A back-up power source for electricity disruptions is essential. When the alarm sounds, get out of your apartment or home immediately and call the fire department.

## **Fire Extinguishers**

Every home and apartment should have at least one fire extinguisher. If you have one, learn how to use it correctly. Only use fire extinguishers on small, contained fires. Never let the fire get between you and an exit. Pull, aim, squeeze, and sweep.

## **Escape Planning**

Develop and practice a home fire escape plan. In case a fire starts, everyone must know two ways out of every room, if possible. Individuals should also know where to meet relative or others once they get outdoors. Also, in case of a fire, don't try to save possessions. Get out and stay out.

## **Disaster and Emergency Preparedness**

Every home and place of business should have an emergency plan. The plan should outline key information and should identify potential risks. In advance of a disaster or large-scale emergency occurring, an emergency kit should be compiled with food, water and other essential items. A list of these items is available at [www.getprepared.ca](http://www.getprepared.ca). Residents should be able to cope on their own for 72 hours while emergency responders address the most critical needs of the community first. Being prepared ahead of time is the most effective way to ensure personal safety when disaster strikes.

## **Power Outages**

When the electricity is off, take care when using alternative lighting, cooking and heating equipment. Use flashlights or battery-operated lanterns instead of hurricane lamps or candles during a power outage.

## **Generators**

More and more people are purchasing generators as a back-up power source. While these appliances can provide alternative energy during power outages, portable generators can create electrical hazards if not properly installed, operated, and maintained. Individuals are also at risk of carbon monoxide poisoning if the unit is not situated in a properly ventilated location. Portable generators should only be used outdoors.

## **Frozen Pipes**

Never try to thaw frozen pipes on your own. Have a professional perform this work. Leave a tap on slightly to try to prevent them from freezing in the first place. If pipes still freeze up, call a certified plumber, and never use propane torches or an open flame to fix this problem. Use cloths/rags soaked in hot water to address the issue if you must.

## **Fridges, Freezers and Deep Freezes**

Don't open your freezer or fridge unless it is absolutely necessary. A full freezer will keep food frozen for 24 to 36 hours if the door remains closed.