



June 16, 2009

Ads show three minutes could save your life

Today's fires burn faster, hotter and more toxic than ever before. Preventing them has never been more important

Edmonton... The Alberta government has launched a new hard-hitting fire safety campaign to teach Albertans how to prevent, detect and escape from fires.

The education and awareness campaign was developed as part of the government's commitment made last summer to take action against high-intensity residential fires.

"This campaign was designed to help make fire-safe practices second nature for Albertans," said Municipal Affairs Minister Ray Danyluk. "We want people to check their smoke alarms once a month without even thinking about it, so fire safety becomes as automatic as putting on your seatbelt."

In addition to this awareness campaign, which was developed with a budget of \$300,000 per year, the government has made recent improvements to the province's building code to make safe homes safer and improvements to the fire code to increase security and fire safety on construction sites. Together these actions will help minimize the severity, frequency and damage caused by high-intensity residential fires.

"Most of us believe we are doing enough to be safe, but there is always more we can do," said Dale McLean, Deputy Fire Chief, Edmonton Fire and Rescue Services. "Taking simple steps like never leaving cooking unattended and spending a few minutes clearing away trash from around the house can make all the difference and help keep us and our neighbours safer from fire."

Starting June 16, the new television and radio advertisements will be aired province-wide. They will direct people to a new, interactive website that acts as a one-stop source for a wide variety of important information about fire safety. From the website, people can print off a quick checklist to make sure they are doing all they can to keep safe, or they can sign up for regular e-mail reminders to do things like change the batteries in their smoke alarms. For a copy of the ads and to learn more, please visit: 3minutedrill.alberta.ca

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Backgrounder: Research findings on fire safety

Media inquiries may be directed to:

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Research shows people think they already know everything they need to know about fire safety

The Alberta government conducted research in 2008 to establish a baseline about the public's current knowledge and attitudes about high-intensity residential fires.

The research served as a foundation for developing the public education and awareness campaign to inform Albertans about potential fire hazards and arson prevention and to encourage them to adopt safe housekeeping practices that can protect their families, homes and neighbours from fires.

The research indicated key areas where people had knowledge gaps including:

- Just how quickly a fire can start and spread
- How many fire risks exist outside the home (in the yard, deck, BBQ etc)
- The prevalence of cooking fires
- Regular smoke alarm testing to ensure power supply and replacement

The research found that most people understand that fire can happen to anyone and it is tragic, but the majority also believe that they are generally safe, that they behave in a safe way and that they would have lots of time to react if a fire did occur. The experience of fire departments, however, shows that most people are overconfident in this area - most people are not doing everything they need to do, all of the time.

Arson is one aspect of fire prevention where people believe they are helpless, yet it is a common cause of fire. Although arson is not addressed in this campaign, the research confirmed that work needs to continue at the community level to focus on the opportunistic nature of many arson crimes, which will help people feel less helpless to prevent arson.

To view the full research findings, please visit: www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca

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