



## Fire Prevention Week Focuses on Household Smoke Alarms

Date: Thursday, September 30, 2010

For Immediate Release

VICTORIA, BC – Recognized annually every October, *Fire Prevention Week* will be held across British Columbia from Sunday, October 3 to Saturday, October 9, 2010. This year's campaign is *Smoke Alarms: A Sound You Can Live With!*, which focuses on educating residents on the proper installation, testing and maintenance of household smoke alarms, and how to plan and practise escaping from a residence, should a fire occur.

This year's theme is timely due to recent changes to the BC Fire Code, which improve public safety by requiring smoke alarms in all homes. Previously, only homes built after 1979 required smoke alarms.

Smoke alarms are cost effective devices which can alert occupants of fire at its early stages, saving lives and property. Here is what you need to know about household smoke alarms:

- Smoke alarms should be installed on every level of a home including the basement, outside each sleeping area and in each bedroom. Large homes may need additional smoke alarms. Never remove or disable smoke alarms.
- Test your smoke alarm once a month by pressing the "test" button to ensure it sounds. If your smoke alarm chirps on its own, the battery is low and needs to be replaced. Batteries should be replaced at least once a year.
- Smoke alarms that are more than 10 years old need to be replaced. This includes battery operated and hard-wired alarms. Check the back or side of a smoke alarm for the manufacture date.
- Interconnecting smoke alarms are highly recommended; when one smoke alarm sounds, they all do. This is particularly important in large or multi-storey homes, where the sound from a distant smoke alarm may be reduced to the point that it may not be loud enough to provide proper warning, especially to sleeping individuals.

Fire departments from across British Columbia will again participate in the *Community Fire Drill* on Wednesday, October 6, 2010 at 6:30 p.m. All participating fire departments will have their trucks outside their halls and may sound their sirens to signify the start of the drill at 6:30 p.m. When residents hear the sirens, they should test their smoke alarm, then practise their escape plan and gather at their predetermined meeting place. Residents are encouraged to discuss their plan with their local fire department if they have questions or concerns.

### For More Information:

Contact your local fire department or the Office of the Fire Commissioner at 1.888.988.9488

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