

Spring 2017

Mark your calendar:
**NATIONAL WILDFIRE
 PREPAREDNESS DAY**
 May 6 (event at Fire Station 2)
FIRE PREVENTION WEEK
 October 8-14



Inside this issue:

Message from the Chief	2
Forest Fire Danger Rating	2
Costs for Illegal Burning	2
Protecting what you value	3
Turtles need help too...	3
The first 72 hours...	3
False Fire Alarms	4

Special points of interest:

- Only **WORKING** smoke alarms save lives—have you changed the batteries in yours?
- You **MUST** plan (and practice) how to escape from your home before fire strikes...
- **Get out and Stay out!**



COTTAGE EXPRESS

Recognizing the risk from “Wildfires”

Living and vacationing in Muskoka is a dream come true for many. But there are risks involved and it’s important for you to understand what those risks entail.

For those who live amongst stands of tall coniferous and hardwood trees, one of the risks is from the threat of “wildland” or “wildfires”.

A forest fire is one of nature’s most spectacular sights, and one that has the power to destroy unprotected homes in its path.

It’s important for everyone to realize that this risk is very real here, and for everyone to take fire prevention seriously.

Being extra conscious of every cigarette butt, every campfire that is lit, of how you landscape your property and how you dispose of debris can be critical steps in preventing a needless fire.



As your spring clean-up routine continues, be sure to empty eaves troughs of dead leaves and pine needles; keep dead vegetation away

from your home, cottage and propane tanks; take dead branches etc. to the landfill rather than burning them (note that burning is prohibited by by-law during the day in ALL areas of Gravenhurst); and plan how

you would react if a wildfire breaks out near your property.

“FireSmart” is a complete fire prevention program aimed at keeping the “wildland-urban interface” safe from these devastating events. Learn how to protect your family by coming to **National Wildfire Preparedness**

Day, May 6, Fire Station 2, 1030 Kilworthy Road, Gravenhurst or go to:

www.firesmartcanada.ca

Carbon Monoxide Alarms Mandatory!



You’ve heard it said that carbon monoxide is a colourless, odourless gas that can kill! Too many lives have been lost to “the silent killer” and that’s why it’s now mandatory in Ontario for residences to have CO alarms installed if your home (or cottage) has ANY type of fuel fired appliance (wood stove, propane or natural gas fueled furnace/stove/refrigerator/hot water heater etc.) or an attached garage. Have appliances checked annually by qualified technicians, and make sure you’ve **INSTALLED** a CO alarm now!

(These inexpensive devices are available locally at Home Hardware, Canadian Tire and other fine retailers).

Message from the Fire Chief

“... if you have a fire in your home and you are not standing on your front lawn when the fire department arrives – chances are you will not survive the fire.”

Last year, a Coroner’s inquest into two residential fires elicited testimony that was shocking to hear for some people. The inquest examined the circumstances of two fires where 7 people died. Three young people died in a 2nd floor apartment in a house, while 4 members of another family perished when a fire damaged their home. The causes of each fire were not remarkable – in fact they are indicative of fires that happen every day in Ontario. The fact that 7 people died in two fires IS remarkable though – both fires were a tragedy for the families and friends of those involved, and for communities where they lived and were supposed to be safe.

If we can’t be safe in our very own homes (or cottages) then one has to wonder where CAN we be safe?

An Office of the Fire Marshal investigator testified at the inquest with these words... **“if you have a fire in your home and you are not standing on your front lawn when the fire department arrives – chances are you will not survive the fire.”**

People seem to have several misconceptions about fires in the home - the first is “it won’t happen to me”. The second is, “if I have a fire, I’ll have plenty of time to gather my belongings and get out”. And the third is, “oh well, if I get caught in a

fire, the fire department will come and rescue me”.

In reality, here in Ontario, even in places like Mississauga and Toronto, it is very rare that firefighters arrive in time to save someone from the grips of death - yes, it happens occasionally, a couple of times a year in the province, but for more than 100 people last year, we were too late!

Preventing fires is key. Be aware of what risks are in your home or cottage and take steps to eliminate or reduce those risks. Working smoke alarms and a practiced escape plan are essential as well. Don’t be scared – BE PREPARED! If we can help with any aspect of fire safety, please call us at 705-687-3414.

Larry Brassard, Fire Chief

Open Fires/Fireworks/Forest Fire Danger Rating

Burning brush and having a campfire in the evening with the kids is part of our way of life here in Muskoka, but like anything, some common sense goes a long way to making these activities safe, fun and enjoyable.

Gravenhurst has a by-law that regulates open air burning and so if you consider having a fire, please check the town’s website for the

regulations. Essentially, fires must be limited in size and are **only permitted in the evenings**. They must be attended at all times and you must have a means to extinguish the fire immediately available.

Sometimes, environmental conditions will require a complete ban on fires because of an increased risk of forest fires. The Muskoka Forest Fire Danger Rating system is utilized by

all fire departments. Current conditions are listed on the town’s website, on prominently displayed signs in the community and can be accessed toll free by calling:

1-877-847-1577

The use of family fireworks are currently not regulated though the fire department **strongly discourages** their use in forested areas due to the risk of grass/brush/forest fires.



Burning Illegally? Costs for Fire Response...

Town Council has enabled a policy surrounding cost recovery for fire department responses to situations involving **violations** of the Burning Control By-law through the fees and charges by-law. This cost recovery effort is separate and distinct from any enforcement action that may be initiated by the Town’s By-Law Enforcement Division.

Essentially, the fees and charges By-law authorizes the Fire Department to recover costs through the issuance of an invoice to **the property owner** after its attendance at a fire where it can be shown that this occurred because of someone’s

choice to disobey the law. **In the case of a cottage rental, the owner will receive the invoice even though they may not be present** - so please educate your renters.

As authorized by Council, invoices issued will reflect a cost of \$459.45 per hour per truck (the standard rate in Ontario), plus the costs of *attending* firefighter wages. Because the department utilizes volunteer firefighters for response purposes, the cost of wages varies from day-to-day, and from incident-to-incident.

Please note that the fire department does not respond to “simple” open air burning complaints where there is no threat to public safety – these are referred to By-law enforcement staff for investigation as their resources allow—**please call 705-687-3412, extension 241** to report burning offences where there is no emergency.

Occasionally, firefighters *do* discover by-law infractions upon being sent to reports of grass fires, trees on fire or other similar circumstances. The cost recovery process is followed with these instances as well.



Protecting what you value most...

Did you know that smoke alarms that are more than 10 years old need to be replaced? And Carbon Monoxide alarms also have limited life spans (check yours for an expiry date).

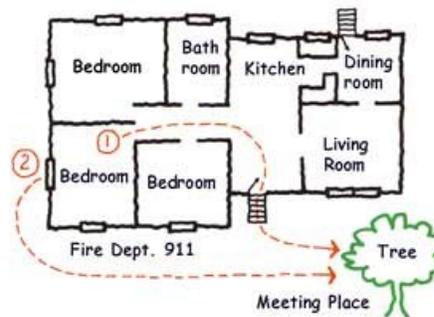
Ontario law requires that working smoke alarms be present on all levels in all homes—and that includes seasonal residences like cottages and trailers. Carbon Monoxide detectors are now mandatory for homes and cottages in Ontario as well when fuel fired appliances are present or there is an attached garage!

But knowing what to do when that alarms sounds at 3am is just as important as having a working alarm. In a fire, you may have **less than a minute** to get out of your home and so you need to talk with your family **NOW** about home escape planning. Talk with your children about primary and secondary escape routes, the importance of getting out quickly and having a safe meeting place outside. Decide how and who will call 9-1-1 and if there's a need to temporarily shelter at a neighbour's.

Do a home and cottage safety

audit and remove any hazards you find. Invest in a good fire extinguisher and know how to use it! Call us if you need help with any of these.

Don't put these things off to tomorrow or next week... do it now, and protect what you value most!



Our Turtles Need Your Help!

Did you know that Muskoka is home to some species of turtles that are on the “threatened” or “endangered” list? Did you know that turtles typically nest in June, and often look for soft, sandy area’s to lay their eggs? Did you know that the soft shoulders of the roads in Muskoka make attractive nesting sites for our turtles?

Well, all of these things are true, and each one of us can take action to

protect these creatures from preventable accidents.

Turtles attempting to cross roadways are especially vulnerable, and so in many area’s of our community “Turtle Crossing” signs have been erected to raise awareness. Please use caution and watch for turtles in these areas especially.

Scales Nature Reserve has a special monitoring hotline set up for you to report turtles who are “rare,

nesting or injured.” Please call: **705-955-4254** if you want to report one of these.

Also see: www.scalesnaturepark.ca for more information...

(Image on the right is a Blanding’s Turtle, note yellow throat, spots on high-domed shell)



The First 72 hours...

The Town of Gravenhurst maintains a “Community Emergency Management Team” whose mandate is to maintain the town’s official emergency plan and conduct activities that are regulated by provincial legislation.

Current trends in preparedness planning suggest that every family be prepared for severe weather events

such as floods, tornadoes and other emergencies by preparing a family survival kit. Preparing your family to be self-sufficient for up to 72 hours is important.

You can make it a fun activity too for all family members. Go to www.getprepared.ca for more information on how to prepare

YOUR emergency kit and other helpful information.



Plan, Prepare, Be Aware!

GRAVENHURST FIRE DEPARTMENT

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GRAVENHURST
GATEWAY TO MUSKOKA

FALSE AND NUISANCE FIRE ALARMS

Fees to be invoiced effective January 1, 2018

The response to false and nuisance fire alarms expose our firefighters to unnecessary risks and increases fire department operating costs for all ratepayers. In most cases these unnecessary alarms are preventable. Many are the result of improper installation or maintenance—issues that are the responsibility of property owners.

Commencing January 1st 2018, where the fire department is called to respond to a fire alarm and no actual emergency exists, a fee for service will be applied for repeated false alarms.

In most cases, a written caution on the first occasion of a false alarm response will be issued, however upon a second false alarm response in a calendar year, an invoice will be issued and directed to the **property owner** representing partial cost recovery for the response.

Normally, at least two fire trucks are dispatched to fire alarm activations, and so these will be invoiced at the rate of **\$459.45 per hour per truck, plus the costs of attending fire personnel (plus HST)**.

For more information, please see:

www.gravenhurst.ca

HELP WANTED!

ANSWER THE CALL!

That's the tag line for our recruiting initiative which is underway as of NOW.

We're always looking to bolster our ranks of volunteer/part-time firefighters and the need is especially acute here during the traditional work day.

If you are between the ages of 18 and 60, are in good physical condition, enjoy learning new skills and being part of a high performing team, becoming a part-time firefighter could be right for you.

Homemakers, truck drivers, electricians, gentlemen farmers... all have made great Gravenhurst firefighters in the past... now its your turn!

We offer:

- Excellent training and transferrable skills
- All personal protective clothing and uniforms
- Competitive wages
- Full WSIB coverage and supplemental insurance benefits
- Friendships that can last a lifetime
- Fun, excitement and a sense of self-satisfaction from helping others in their time of need.

Interested? Call us or go to our website and download an application.



Final Thoughts... A new Captain needed to use a pay phone, but didn't have change for a dollar. He saw a probationary firefighter mopping the floors, and asked him, "Hey rookie, do you have change for a dollar?" The firefighter replied, "Sure." The Captain gave him an icy stare. He said, "That's no way to address a superior officer! Now let's try that again.... Firefighter, do you have change for a dollar?" The young firefighter thought for a moment and then replied, "NO, SIR!" and continued mopping.