

ONONDAGA FIRE PREVENTION NEWSLETTER 2010

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 5

FIRE PREVENTION WEEK, OCTOBER 3 – 9, 2010



64% Increase in Onondaga Calls

From January 1st – August 31st 2009, Onondaga firefighters responded to 34 calls. For the same period in 2010, they have responded to 53 calls. That's a 64% increase. This statistic reflects the shift from just fire and accident type calls, to our firefighters now assisting with a broad range of emergency services.

GRAND RIVER FAMILIARIZATION TRAINING, SUMMER 2010

Onondaga firefighters are being called upon to respond to an ever expanding diverse range of emergency calls. Long gone are the days when Onondaga firefighters were called mainly for fire or accident responses. Now, medical assist, carbon monoxide detector and river rescue calls are additional emergency situations that they handle. In the last year, Onondaga firefighters have responded with their rescue boat to assist police operations in the Grand River in at least three different situations. On one occasion, they assisted locating vehicles that were in the river. Another time, Onondaga firefighters were called to help police in locating a fugitive in the area in and around the river. More recently, our firefighters aided in locating missing persons on the river in the middle of the night. This diverse range in the nature of emergency calls means that there is an ever increasing need for more and different types of training for firefighters. Onondaga firefighters are diligent in conducting and receiving training.

How to Avoid Dryer Fires

Too often, clothes dryers, either electric or gas, are the cause of house fires. Here are some important hints to help avoid dryer fires:

- Lack of maintenance is the #1 cause of dryer fires. It is critical to clean the lint filter before each use, & wipe away any accumulated lint from around the drum.
- Perform periodic checks to ensure that the air exhaust vent pipe is unobstructed (lint accumulation) & the outdoor vent flap opens freely.
- Do not run the dryer without a lint filter.
- You are encouraged to not leave the dryer running if you go out, in case it malfunctions.

BEEP! BEEP! BEEP! Smoke Alarms: A sound you can live with.

Onondaga firefighters remind you that smoke detectors are a first line of defence against fire. Remember:

- **If smoke detectors are not working, they cannot protect you and your family.**
- **Non-operational smoke detectors are usually caused by missing or dead batteries, or being disconnected.**
- **Change batteries at least twice a year – at the beginning and end of daylight savings time.**
- **It's the law in Ontario that you must have operating smoke detectors on every level of your home & outside sleeping areas.**
- **Test your smoke detectors often.**
- **Develop an escape plan & practice so everyone in your family knows what to do if a smoke detector sounds.**
- **Check detectors during & after home renovations – they can be vacuumed without opening to get rid of dust.**

Preventing Fires in Winter

Winter season is the worst season for fires in Canada. During this cold season, we must heat our homes, most of our meals are prepared and eaten indoors, often our clothes are dried indoors, and people who smoke do so indoors. In winter, remember that:

- Heater appliances such as space heaters, should not have anything combustible nearby: leave at least 3 ft. (1 metre) of space clear around them. Inspect the electrical cord attached. If it overheats, you have a fire hazard. Keep young children away from heaters.
- Electrical & heating systems can fail and become fire hazards. Ensure they are checked regularly by a professional, especially prior to the winter season, when fireplaces, heaters, appliances, & other equipment are in maximum use.
- Smoking while in bed, tired, or under the influence of alcohol or medication is the most common cause of fires that kill.
- Most chimney fires occur with wood-burning fireplaces. Ensure chimneys are cleaned and professionally inspected regularly. Burn only small quantities of wood at a time.
- Teach children that fire is not a toy. It is a tool to cook food & heat our homes.
- Educate your children about the dangers of fire and make sure they know that all fires, even small ones, can spread very quickly.
- Never use a flammable liquid near a flame or source of spark. Be aware of hidden sources like water heater pilot lights, electric motors or heaters. Never smoke while pouring or using flammable liquids.
- Even if a small doubt exists about any appliances (equipment) that you use, call a qualified technician. It may save your life, and the lives of your loved ones.

Signs of Electrical Problems:

Flickering lights - If the lights flicker everytime you turn on an appliance, it means that the circuit is overloaded or has a loose connection.

Sparks - If sparks appear when you insert or remove a plug, it could be a sign of loose connections.

Warm electrical cord - If an electrical cord is warm to the touch, the cord is under rated or defective.

Frequent blown fuses or broken circuits - A fuse that continues to blow or a circuit breaker that keeps tripping is an important warning sign of problems.

Frequent bulb burnout - A light bulb that burns out frequently is a sign that the bulb is too high in wattage for the fixture. You should check the manufacturer's recommendation.

September 2010, Onondaga Gets Newer Pumper



The office of the Ontario Fire Marshal now sets standards for the age of fire trucks and the size of their pumps. Onondaga's older pumper no longer met either of these criteria. County of Brant Fire Administration has now allocated a newer cabover style pumper for Onondaga Station 6. This newer Unit #61 pumper has a higher capacity pump, a covered hose bed, and has more storage capacity. As a result, additional equipment and tools for first responses can be carried on the initial truck arriving at an emergency scene. In the fifty two year history of Onondaga firefighting, this is only the third truck to serve as a pumper fire truck. Both former serving pumpers, the 1958 Dodge and the 1986 Hub fire truck were great sources of pride for Onondaga firefighters and the Onondaga community.

Message from District Chief Station 6 Onondaga,

Early in 2010, Onondaga firefighters welcomed two new members, Allan Dickenson and Daniel Featherston to County of Brant Station 6. They bring fresh training, energy and enthusiasm to our firehall. We all are enjoying having Allan and Daniel as fellow firefighters and I thank them for going through what is now, by necessity, a rather arduous process to become a volunteer firefighter in our community.

2010 also marked the retirement of Onondaga firefighter Steve Smith. Sincere thanks for 31 years of community service as an Onondaga firefighter, Steve. We all enjoyed working with you, and we will look forward to your continued involvement in our social activities.

I am very proud of the great morale and commraderie in our Onondaga firehall. Our 19 firefighters bring diverse backgrounds and talents to work together to get the job done in a safe and effective way. Thanks guys for all the hours you give up for training, equipment checks and calls.

