

May 17, 2023 presentation to Carr's Landing Community & Recreation Association by Lake Country Fire Department firefighters Eric DeGelder & Ryan Murdain

Smoke Alarm Placement

- 2018 – BC Building Code requires Smoke Alarms in the bedrooms and hallways – these are linked so that any detected smoke or CO2 will cause the alarm to sound in all rooms
- Smoke alarms are only good for 10 years – look for their expiry date and replace; smoke alarm batteries need to be changed every 6 months and every smoke alarm should be connected to power and have a battery backup.
- Smoke alarms in older homes may not be wired in. Additional smoke alarms can easily be added, though not linked unless installed by an electrician.
- Most new alarms are for both smoke and carbon monoxide.

Establish a Family Meeting Place – especially important for your family and visitors.

Home Escape plan – make sure everyone knows two ways out of every room.

Meeting place – decide upon a place in or near your yard where you'll all meet if you evacuate your home – make sure your household and visitors know this. It should be far enough away from the home that it is safe in a fire but close enough everyone can get to it, needs to be away from the fire hydrant which will be engaged by fire crews. Fire crews will want to ensure all visitors and family members are safe when they arrive at a call – if you're not together, valuable time will be lost.

Family evacuation meeting place – decide upon a place outside Carr's Landing where your household will meet up if there is a large evacuation and you cannot go home – consider your routes to and from work, shopping, travel, etc. and out on the water. While normally the best communication tool, cellphones may not work in an emergency due to overloaded lines and cell tower failures. Ensure your household knows this place, including children who may be at school, sports or playing elsewhere and let out-of-town family and frequent visitors know your meeting place.

Evacuation kit – if you take daily medications or require other necessities, keep a small supply in your car along with sufficient food and water for a day; remember pet needs too. Consider including photocopies of important contact numbers and documents.

Short term rental requirements – consider these STR safety requirements for your home, especially if you have family or friends who make use of your home when you are not there:

- A business license is required if you are renting out your home for stays of less than a month.
- Every home should have an ABC fire extinguisher.
- Post your Home Escape Plan.
- Working smoke alarms.
- Post or otherwise provide alarm codes, gate codes, phone numbers of security/alarm service providers.
- Post or otherwise provide your contact information plus a back-up contact in case of an emergency.

Gates and Lock Boxes

Do you have a Fire Department lock box on your gate? If you are not home, this allows fire crews to open your gate quickly, without breaking it open. Be sure to update the Fire Department when you change keys and codes. If not, consider providing gate codes / keys to neighbours for emergency access. House fires double every 30 seconds so any delay will increase fire damage

Fire Department

Carr's Landing, Oyama and Winfield – The District of Lake Country Fire Department has just 8 full time staff, all of whom are fully trained firefighters. It has 65 fully trained *Paid On Call* members. *Paid On Call* firefighters are your neighbourhood volunteers, who get a stipend when they are called out to respond - community work they do is voluntary.

Lake Country Fire Department vs big city fire departments:

- Dependent upon *Paid On Call* firefighters.
- Despite *Paid On Call* firefighters responding when calls are received, from home or work, response times are fairly comparable to cities though distance from the station to the call is a factor.
- Your local *Paid On Call* firefighters will almost always be the first emergency response personnel to respond a 911 call for medical assistance; ambulances will follow.
- Training and certification levels are at or above those of (bigger) city fire departments and include emergency medical, forestry, low/steep, ice rescue, marine rescue and motor vehicle accident training. Trainees are qualified to 1001 College of the Rockies and 1002 Professional Driving (Class 5 with air brake endorsement) level.
- Recruits (17 intake this year) take 6 months of training (16 hrs/wk) before they can attend fires (exterior only), then an additional 6 months before attending interior fires.
- All training is provided free of charge with a 3-year commitment - unique to DLC Fire Department.
- Firefighters are 'loaned' to other jurisdictions, especially for wildfires.
- Most recruits last about 5 years as burnout due to amount of training, sleep disruption, etc, take a toll.
- Average 3 calls/day: 60% medical, 20% alarms, 12-15% motor vehicle accidents, 5-8% fires.
- Full time staff are focussed on preventing and mitigating fires before they start.

FireSmart

Home Partners Program – this has replaced the program offered through FireSmart two years ago:

- A Home Assessment can be done, for free, by Lake Country Fire Department. If your remedies to hazards they identify exceed \$1000, you may apply for a grant of \$500. Call the Fire Department to ask about this (250)766-2327
- The Home Assessment will identify fire hazards and make suggestions to increase fire safety around the exterior of your home, including landscape, finishes, woodpiles, debris, etc.
- The BC Building Code will be changing and is expected to increase fire safety requirements.
- Fire Smart is now working with insurance companies; it is possible that home insurance discounts may be offered for households in interface zones that have conducted a Home Assessments and responded to suggestions.