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Modern houses burn faster Fire Prevention Week 2009

Provided by Alberta Emergency Management Agency

Research over three decades has shown that modern homes may be making house fires more deadly than ever before.

Newer homes and furnishings are made with more synthetics which make fires ignite and burn faster. They also release more toxic gases when burned. Most fire victims die from smoke or toxic gases and not from actual burns. Deadly conditions are reached much more quickly now than in the 1970's when more natural materials were used in home and furnishings.

Over thirty years ago, an important study conducted tests in actual homes with floor plans, furniture and items, and smoke alarms on the market. That report concluded smoke alarms generally provided the necessary escape time for different fire types and locations. This research led to the popular use of smoke alarms in residential settings

A more recent 2005 study found a troubling difference with the previous investigation's results. The amount of safe escape time was consistently shorter and the fire growth rates were faster. It is thought that synthetic materials currently found in homes contributed to this change. The study concluded that because fires could be more aggressive, the time needed to escape home fires has been reduced from approximately 17 minutes to as little as three minutes.

This gives less time for occupants to escape a fire and is shorter than the seven minute response time target for fire services. This disparity can mean the difference between life and death.

In May 2008, Alberta Municipal Affairs launched a public education and awareness campaign to make citizens aware of the three-minute window of safety in a house fire and the seven minute fire services response time. In

rural areas served by volunteer fire departments, the response times can be expected to be longer than the seven minutes expected municipal/urban fire departments. Albertans are encouraged to plan for a three-minute evacuation in case of a fire. These messages are dramatized in a 30-second television video clip that was first aired across Alberta on Global TV in mid-June to mid-July, 2009. A second launch of the campaign will take place in mid-September to mid-October.

The campaign serves as a reminder of our personal responsibility for fire safety: the prevention of fires in the first place; the detection of smoke and fire with working smoke alarms as a second line of defense; and evacuation to safety by having a well-rehearsed fire escape plan as the third and most important action. The TV commercial is designed to motivate the public to visit a unique, interactive website, www.3minutedrill.alberta.ca. This site contains easily understood fire prevention and safety tips using a model house in cross-section. In addition, it provides smoke alarm and escape planning information.

For more information on fire safety in Alberta, contact your municipality's fire or emergency service or Alberta Emergency Management Agency at 780-422-9000 (dial 310-0000 for toll-free access outside Edmonton), email aema@gov.ab.ca or visit www.aema.alberta.ca and click on the Public Education/Awareness link.

Updates, news and resources

ACICR welcomes new staff!

Welcome to Mike O'Connor, Tanya Thompson and Nancy Stammers. They are the newest regional traffic safety coordinators working with communities to address local and regional traffic safety issues.

Mike O'Connor – Region 3,
403-826-4269 or
mike.oconnor@gov.ab.ca.

Tanya Thompson – Region 8,
780-814-4398 or
tanya.thompson@gov.ab.ca.

Nancy Stammers – Region 9
East, 780-717-4265 or
nancy.stammers@gov.ab.ca.

Fire Prevention Week

Fire Prevention Week is
October 4 – 10, 2009.

The theme of this year's Fire Prevention Week is Stay Fire Smart! Don't Get Burned. For more information about Fire Prevention Week in Alberta, visit www.aema.alberta.ca and click on the Public Education/Awareness link.

Communicating to teens

The National Center for Health Marketing at CDC recently published *Audience Insights: Communicating to Teens (Aged 12-17)*. Use of this resource provides ideas to help communicate more effectively with teens. The brief looks at teens' media habits, online activities and their use of social media. To download the publication go to www.cdc.gov/healthmarketing/pdf/audienceinsight_teens.pdf.

Alberta Centre for Active Living celebrates 20 years

By Erin Ottosen, Communications and Marketing Coordinator, Alberta Centre for Active Living

The Alberta Centre for Active Living is celebrating its 20th anniversary this fall, and there is much to celebrate.

In 20 years the centre has firmly established itself as one of Canada's premier advocates of physical activity. The centre is also a key source of evidence-based resources for people who promote physical activity in their work. And throughout the years, there has been a strong link to the injury prevention work of the Alberta Centre for Injury Control & Research (ACICR).

For example, the two centres collaborated on the Health in Action project for its entire life, from 1995 to August 2009. Health in Action was a comprehensive website that collected news, programs, and other information about injury prevention, health promotion, and population health in Alberta.

The Alberta Centre for Active Living also contributes to falls prevention among older adults. The centre supports Alberta's *Finding Balance* campaign, and this fall, the centre is publishing and disseminating *Preventing Falls Through Physical Activity: A Guide for People Working with Older Adults*. The centre was able to produce this guide thanks to a grant from the Community Injury Control Fund that is coordinated by ACICR.

"We're grateful for the relationships we have with organizations such as ACICR," says Judith Down, Director of the Alberta Centre for Active Living. "By working together, we are able to accomplish more."

For more information on the Alberta Centre for Active Living and the services it provides, call toll-free in Alberta at 1-800-661-4551, or visit the website at www.centre4activeliving.ca.

Dreams and hopes CAN become a successful reality!

By Trudy Smith, Fire Chief, Barons Fire Department

In 2006 when I became Fire Chief, I had the thought that we should host and run a Farm Machinery Extrication Course. Being in an agricultural province, I felt that we should know what to do in case we get that dreaded call: "Someone is stuck or injured in a piece of farm machinery equipment!"

Instead of wondering what to do and if we are doing the right thing, I was firmly convinced that we needed to *know*.

A Farm Machinery Extrication Course came to fruition this last August in the small Village of Barons. We have a population of 297 people and tripled our population for the weekend of August 8-11 while the course was held.

We learned a lot that weekend. The most important thing we learned is that safety comes first, no matter whose safety we are talking about, be it the farmer, the bystander, or the first responders. Take a step back and see what is involved, spend an extra moment observing the situation and then make your decision. Prepare the

scene so that it is safe for everyone involved.

The same principle can be applied to any situation in everyday life. Make sure there are no hazards around that can hurt anyone. Keep your zones safe. The Hot Zone is where you are working and only those involved in the actual rescue are allowed there. The Warm Zone is where you have your tools, your back-up crew, and the materials you need. Everything and everyone else is in the Cold Zone, out of the way of any harm and the people performing the rescue tasks.

I had an interesting conversation with the reservation agent who booked the flights for the course instructors. She had just lost a cousin in a farm machinery incident. Needless to say, she thought this course was an excellent idea.

Remember that it can happen to you. But with extra caution and education, the life we save could be our own. Let's be safe out there!

National Survey: Community Success for Reducing Injuries Linked to Using Social Determinants of Health

By Rod Kelly, Director, Marketing, Communications & Fund Development, Safe Communities Canada

A new study shows that community leaders who use 7 or more social determinants of health to plan programs at the local level are far more likely to be successful.

One of the most significant findings contained in Safe Communities Canada's third National Report Card is that 98% of Canadian Safe Communities consider the social determinants of health, as defined by Health Canada, when they implement local injury reduction initiatives. Most telling, however, is that the top 30 ranking communities consider 7 or more of the social determinants of health in their overall planning. The results also suggest a clear link between leadership, social determinants and the attributes that make the top-performing communities so successful. Thus, there is a convincing case for organizations looking to make an impact in the delivery of quality initiatives in the area of injury prevention or health promotion to assess these determinants in their implementation strategies.

The survey also confirms that volunteer organizations with a credible succession plan attract and retain a greater number of volunteers. Sixty-five per cent of Safe Communities report that they have such a plan, an increase of 15 per cent from the previous year. The study shows that the Leadership Tables (local leadership group members) with the highest number of volunteers are those Leadership Tables which have a succession plan.

During the past year, over 3,800 volunteers contributed over 60,000 hours to the cause of injury prevention and safety promotion in Canadian Safe Communities, an increase of 1,500 volunteers from the number reported in 2008. These volunteers come from virtually every segment of society including local police, fire and EMS personnel to government and sport and recreation organizations. One of the most significant sources of volunteers is local

businesses, which are playing a greater and more prominent role in Safe Communities across the country

Over 315,000 Canadians were reached last year through quality initiatives, an increase of 130,000 more than the number reported in 2008. Initiatives focused on traffic and transport safety (86%), home safety (84%), workplace safety (79%), recreational safety (79%) and school safety (74.5%).

"Clearly the volunteers across the country involved in the important cause of injury reduction are making an impact in the communities in which they live," Safe Communities Canada President Paul Kells said. "I want to congratulate and thank all those individuals from all walks of life who have made a difference in their workplaces and communities for their kids, their friends, their parents and their neighbours. With their help, and our continued growth, we will continue to forge ahead to increase the awareness of the impact of personal injury on individuals and their families."

Safe Communities Canada is a national charitable organization dedicated to helping communities build the capacity and resources they will need as they commit to coordinated, thoughtful and strategic community-focused and community-driven initiatives to reduce the risk of injury in order to make Canada the safest country in the world to live, learn, work and play. There are 44 active Safe Communities across Canada in 7 provinces and 1 territory representing close to 25 per cent of the Canadian population.

To view the full National Report Card Survey results, visit www.safecommunities.ca/documents.php.

CALENDAR

CPR Month - November

Grant MacEwan Community College
Phone: 780-497-4012

Family Violence Prevention Month - November

Alberta Children's Service, Office for the Prevention of Family Violence
Phone: 780-422-5916

National Community Safety and Crime Prevention Month - November

Canada Safety Council
Phone: 613-739-1535
Website: www.safety-council.org

National Seniors Safety Week

Canada Safety Council
November 6-12, 2009
Phone: 613-739-1535
Website: www.safety-council.org

Sport Concussion Clinic

Nov. 7 and Dec. 5, 2009
NABIS - Glenrose Rehabilitation Hospital, Bill Black Auditorium
Edmonton, AB
Phone: 1-800-425-5552
Email: nabis@abihelp.org
Website: www.nabis.ab.ca

National Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims

World Health Organization
November 15, 2009
Phone: +41 22 791 3480
Website: www.who.int/media/centre/events/en/index.html

National Addictions Awareness Week

Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission
November 22-28, 2009
Phone: (780) 427-7319 or 1-800-459-1884
Website: www.aadac.com

White Ribbon Week

White Ribbon Campaign
November 25-December 6, 2009
Phone: 1-800-328-2228
Website: www.whiteribbon.ca

According to *Child and Youth Injury in Review, 2009 Edition, Spotlight on Consumer Product Safety*, utilizing CHIRPP data, between 2002 and 2006 there were on average 309 bunk bed-related injury cases per year in Canada. Of those, an average of 187 (60 per cent) were associated with the top bunk.

Children between 3 and 5 years of age had the highest number of reported top bunk-related injuries.

Boys accounted for 56 per cent of top bunk bed-related injuries.

Fractures accounted for 40 per cent of the injuries. Minor closed head injuries accounted for another 16 per cent.

The most frequent body region injured was the upper extremity/arm which accounted for 39 per cent of the injuries, followed by skull and brain at 27 per cent.

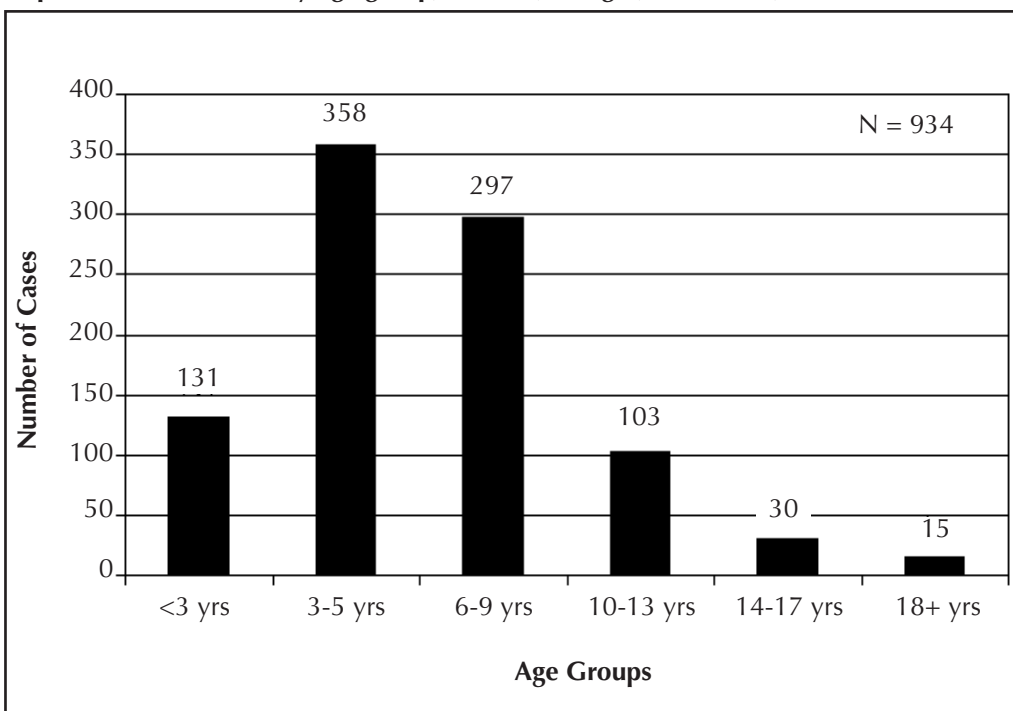
The circumstances associated with injuries that involved the upper bunk were most often falling. Of those, the top 3 activities leading to a fall were:

- playing - 31 per cent
- sleeping and/or resting - 24 per cent
- getting in or out of the top bunk - 12 per cent

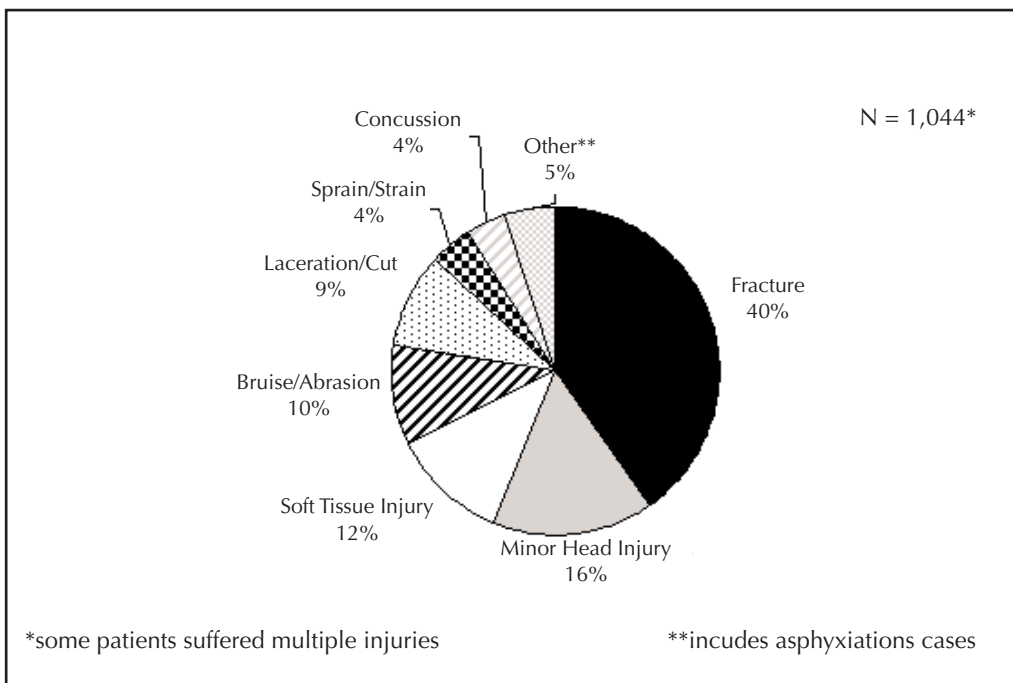
CHIRPP, Canadian Hospitals Injury Reporting and Prevention Program, is an emergency department-based injury surveillance program operated by the Public Health Agency of Canada. There are currently 11 children's and four general hospitals participating in the program. Injuries to a child treated at an emergency department in a hospital not participating in CHIRPP will not be included in the numbers.

Bunk bed-related injuries

Top bunk-related cases by age group, CHIRPP, all ages, both sexes, 2002-2006



Nature of injury, top bunk-related injuries, CHIRPP, all ages, both sexes, 2002-2006



Source: Public Health Agency of Canada. *Child and Youth Injury in Review, 2009 Edition-Spotlight on Consumer Product Safety*. Ottawa, 2009.