



FIRE AND LIFE SAFETY FOR HOME BASED CHILD CARE



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This information has been prepared to help the Home-Based Childcare Professionals become familiar with the important fire and life safety related issues. As a caregiver for small children is important that the proper considerations and actions are always taken to protect and maintain their safety. Young children are very vulnerable, so we will try to provide information for you to ensure you can create and maintain a safe environment for children in your home-based childcare setting. A list of suggested fire and life safety precautions will ensure that your home-based childcare setting provides an acceptable level of fire safety.

Please take the time to review the items outlined below. If you have any questions, please contact the Town of Westlock Fire Department or the Alberta Childcare Connect.

The Government of Alberta has a website with all the Standards and Requirements for Starting and operating a licensed childcare program. They can be reached at 1-844-644-5165 or the website at <https://www.alberta.ca/starting-a-child-care-program.aspx>.

You can get a copy of the Childcare Licensing handbook on the Government of Alberta website at <https://open.alberta.ca/publications/child-care-licensing-handbook-facility-based-programs>.

Precautions to Help Maintain Your Home-Based Childcare Environment

You should not use candles or anything else with an open flame while children are on the premises:

- Do not smoke when you are looking after any children.
- If there are matches, lighters, cigarettes, or ashtrays in your home, you must always keep them securely stored out of children's sight and reach.
- If you choose to use birthday candles or sparklers for special occasions, treat these items with respect. They are potential fire hazards.
- Do not let children light or handle matches. Sparklers are not recommended for indoor use.
- Dispose of candles and sparklers appropriately. Sparklers are very hot after use. Keep a bucket of water nearby to dispose of sparklers after use. One of the safest ways to extinguish a candle is to use a candle snuffer.

Portable fire extinguishers are a must for any Home Based Childcare facility:

- A type 2A:10B:C portable fire extinguisher is recommended. If you are unsure which model to buy to properly protect yourself, children and property, ask the salesperson for assistance to find and order the proper model. Mount the fire extinguisher in accordance with the building code requirements and manufacturer's direction.
- Read the instructions and know how to use the fire extinguisher.
- Install the portable fire extinguisher on the wall close to the means of escape (usually by the exit doors) where it is easy for an adult to reach. Fire extinguishers should be placed close to an escape so that the fire cannot block your escape route.

Limit Flammable artwork in your home-based childcare setting:

- Limit artwork which may catch fire to 20% of the walls.
- Do not put any flammable material on doors.
- One of the nicest ways to decorate a room can be posters or pictures that children in your home based childcare facility have made. Unfortunately, paper products sometimes catch fire, so they should not cover too much wall space. Limit work made of materials, such as paper, cardboard and non-flame-retardant cloth. Never put flammable artwork or decorations on doors.

Do not store more than 15 litres of flammable and combustible liquids (liquids which can easily catch fire and burn/explode) in your home:

- No more than 5 litres can be flammable liquid.
- Liquids such as paint thinner, oil based paint, lacquer; gasoline and propane catch fire easily and are fire hazards. They must be stored in a locked area. It is best to store them in a garage or shed - not inside your home.
- All flammable and combustible liquids (liquids which easily catch fire and burn/explode) should be stored in certified containers, such as Underwriters Laboratories of Canada (ULC) and stored in areas inaccessible to children. The certification mark (ULC) will be clearly stamped on certified containers.
- If you have liquids such as paint thinner, oil-based paint, lacquer, gasoline, or propane on your property, keep them in your locked storage area, garage, or shed in their original containers. Do not dispense these liquids into uncertified containers as you might create a fire hazard.

All waste receptacles should be made of non-combustible materials:

- Waste baskets and containers must be made of material which will not burn. Waste containers that are made of wicker or plastic, or covered with decorative cloth may be attractive,
- BUT they are also fire hazards. Use only waste baskets or waste receptacles which are made of metal or other non-combustible materials.

Practice a fire drill system:

- Practice your fire drill system monthly with the children in your home based childcare setting.
- Arrange a safe meeting place outside and have children practice meeting there.
- Consult with your local fire department when developing your fire drill.

Precautions to Help Maintain Your Home-Based Childcare Environment

Your home-based childcare setting should have two easy-to-reach means of escape on each floor used by children.

- Make sure that the area in which children are cared for has two easy to reach means of escape such as a window or door. Windows should be low enough for children to escape from in the event of a fire. If there are locking devices on the window or door, they should be easy to open from the inside.

Post emergency numbers beside your telephone:

- Fire department, ambulance, and police phone numbers if there is no 911 number for your area and include the address of the home.

Put safety covers on all electrical outlets:

- Small children sometimes try to put small items into electrical outlets. Ensure that safety plugs or protective covers are in place on all outlets.

Toxic articles such as bleach and cleaning products must be stored and out of children's reach:

- Keep poisonous items such as household cleaners, dishwashing detergent, drain cleaners, bleach and laundry products, insecticides, prescription and non-prescription medications, vitamins, skin preparations, cosmetics and nail polish in their original containers out of children's reach.

Heating appliances such as wood, electrical or gas fired stoves must be protected with a permanently mounted and secured metal screen:

- Permanently mounted guards will help to ensure that children are not burned or injured by these hot appliances. Make sure that your chimneys are cleaned at least once a year to prevent build-up of combustible material and a possible chimney fire.

Ensure that working smoke alarms are installed in your home. Smoke alarms must conform to the Underwriters Laboratories of Canada (ULC) standard:

- If you are unsure which model to buy, ask the salesperson for assistance in finding or ordering the correct model.
- You must have at least one smoke alarm for each floor of the home to be adequately protected.

Portable Fire Extinguishers and Smoke Alarms

Portable Fire Extinguishers

To help ensure the safety of children in your home based child care setting, you must have a portable fire extinguisher and ensure you and anyone else who may care for the children know how to use it. The fire extinguisher you buy should have a rating of 2A:10B:C or higher marked clearly on it. The effectiveness of an extinguisher is not determined by its physical size and weight, but by its rating.

Fire extinguishers with this rating are for general use, and can be used to fight small fires caused by:

Type A Fires: ordinary combustibles such as trash, wood, and paper (2A)

Type B Fires: flammable liquids such as grease (10B)

Type C Fires: small appliances (C)



With proper training a portable fire extinguisher can reduce property damage by putting out small, contained fires such as stove-top or wastebasket fires. They cannot fight large or rapidly spreading fires. Use them only against fires caught in their early stages. They will not be effective against a large or established fire.

***Remember: Get the children and yourself out and stay out!**

Installing and Maintaining Portable Fire Extinguishers

Fire extinguishers should be securely mounted on a wall that is close to an exit. Place it so it is easy to see and out of the reach of children (but easy for adults to reach). The top of the extinguisher must be no higher than 1.5m (5') off the floor. It is also a good idea to have an extinguisher in the kitchen and any room with a fireplace or open-flame heater.

- Keep a portable fire extinguisher in your car if you transport children.
- Check all fire extinguishers at least once a month. ULC extinguishers will have a pressure gauge, if pressure has dropped below the acceptable level indicated on the unit, recharge, or replace it.
- Read the instructions that come with the fire extinguisher beforehand and become familiarized with its parts. Recharge the extinguisher immediately after use.

How to use a Portable Fire Extinguisher

When fighting a fire with portable fire extinguisher, remember the word **PASS**:

- 1. PULL** the pin: The pin releases a locking mechanism and will allow you to discharge the extinguisher. Some models require releasing a lock-latch, pressing the lever, or another first step.
- 2. AIM** low: Point the fire extinguisher's nozzle, hose, or horn at the base of the fire. This is important - in order to put out the fire, you must extinguish the fuel.
- 3. SQUEEZE** the handle: This releases the extinguishing agent. If the handle is released, the discharge will stop.
- 4. SWEEP** from side to side: Sweep the extinguisher back and forth, spraying at the base of the fire and working toward the centre until the fire appears to be out. Operate the extinguisher from a safe distance. **Remember: Aim at the base of the fire, not at the flames.**

Do not expose yourself to extreme heat by standing too close to the flames. Avoid direct exposure to smoke as much as possible. Do not try to fight a fire if you cannot see clearly or if your escape route is in danger. Leave as quickly as possible. Remember that your primary responsibility is to protect the children in your care. Ensure that the children are safely out of the building and the fire department has been called. ***Do not re-enter burning building.**

Smoke Alarms

Smoke alarms are one of the most effective and least expensive early warning systems.

Testing

Smoke alarms should be tested monthly by an adult.

- Test the alarm with the children and turn it into a fire drill practice.

**Warn children on what's about to happen and that it is going to be loud. Tell them why the smoke alarm goes off and show them what to do, make an education session out of the test. Infants may be startled by the sound, take this into consideration when testing, perhaps put infants in another room (as long as they can still be supervised) away from the sound of the smoke alarm or consider practicing on a day they are not present. Parents should also be notified about the fire drill their children are participating in.*

- Test smoke alarms by manufacturers recommendation. (by pushing the button).
- The alarm should sound within 20 seconds.
- Mark your calendar to remind you of the next monthly test, as well as when to do the required yearly sensor test (using real or artificial smoke). This is important to do as the sound device may function, when pressing the button, but the sensor may not be working.

If the alarm does not sound:

- Check the battery. If the battery is dead, replace it immediately.
- Electricity may be disconnected check the breaker panel or fuse box, if the problem cannot be fixed, refer to a qualified electrician at once.
- The smoke alarm may be dead, and needs to be replaced immediately.

Maintaining

Dust and dirt can build up and can lead to a false alarm or cause the alarm to malfunction:

- Clean the smoke alarms in your home every six months. Remove the cover, carefully wipe it inside and out with a damp cloth, and gently vacuum the interior of the alarm.
- Change the batteries in your smoke alarm when you change to and from daylight savings time, or as needed and mark it on your calendar.
- Never remove the battery for other uses. This would defeat the purpose of your smoke alarm.

Do Not Disconnect

Humidity from a bathroom or steam or grease from a kitchen can affect the sensitivity of the detecting mechanisms and cause a false alarm:

- If a smoke alarm goes off “for no reason at all” change the location.
- If the problem persists, buy a new smoke alarm with a “silencer button” that can be depressed to temporarily silence the unit during a false alarm.
- Dual technology and photoelectric smoke alarms are also available to help reduce nuisance alarms.

Replace

- The replacement of the smoke alarm should follow the manufacturer’s recommendation. Depending on the date of manufacture this could be more or less than ten years. You can also check replacement dates with the Underwriters Laboratories of Canada (ULC). www.ulc.ca

Home-Based Childcare Safety Checklist

GENERAL:

- Do you have appropriate portable fire extinguishers for each floor? (Fire extinguishers should be placed close to the means of escape (usually an exit door).
- Combustible artwork is limited to 20% of the walls.
- The maximum quantity of stored flammable liquids (i.e. gasoline) and combustible liquids (i.e. oil) in the building does not exceed a total of 15 litres. (Only 5 litres of the total can be flammable liquids)
- All flammable liquids and combustible liquids are stored in certified containers (i.e. Underwriters Laboratories of Canada or ULC) and stored in areas inaccessible to children.
- All waste receptacles are of non-combustible materials (e.g. metal).
- An emergency escape plan is prepared and practiced.
- There are two readily accessible and easily means of escape on each floor that are used by children. Locking devices should be easy to open from the inside.

MEANS OF ESCAPE:

Escape Route 1

Door: swing in swing out slide

Window: swing in swing out slide, height from floor: _____

Escape Route 2

Door: swing in swing out slide

Window: swing in swing out slide, height from floor: _____

- Emergency (Fire, Ambulance, Poison control, 911) numbers and address are clearly posted beside each telephone.
- Safety covers are on electrical outlets.
- Poisonous articles, cleaning fluids, and powders are in locked cupboards.
- Heating appliances such as wood, electrical or gas fired stoves are protected with a permanently mounted and secured metal screen.
- A working smoke alarm is installed on each floor of the facility. Smoke alarms must be ULC certified.
- Candles and anything else with an open flame should not be used while children are on the premises.
- A fire drill system practice is required each month while looking after children in any home-based childcare setting. (National Fire Code (Alberta Edition) Division B, Sub Section 2.8.3)

Safety Plans and Activities

Practice a System of Fire Drills

Practice fire drills each month while you are looking after children in your home based child care setting:

- Your fire department can be consulted when you are preparing a fire drill system. Children should learn the fire drill system and must practice fire drills monthly.
- Ensure that children always wear sturdy shoes and appropriate clothing for cold weather are readily available. During fire drills or during a fire, children may need to go outdoors in cold or inclement weather.
- Send copies of your fire drill system home for parents to review with their children.
- Emergency numbers must be clearly posted beside each telephone.

Eight Fire Safety Behaviours for Preschool Children

The Preschool/Kindergarten lesson in Getting to Know Fire outlines five key fire safety topics, consistent with the National Fire Protection Association's (NFPA) Learn not to Burn Preschool Program emphasizes teaching children what to do in case of a fire. Young children will be better prepared for an emergency if they have been taught basic principles of fire safety. The program has developed eight fire safety rules for preschool children.

1. Stay away from hot things that can hurt.

Teach children that hot things can hurt and to identify things that are hot and things that are not through a variety of activities.

Suggested activities:

- Display pictures of things that are hot and things that are not hot. The hot pictures include an iron, stove, campfire, and birthday cake. The not hot pictures include an apple, a doll, a bike, and crayons. Ask the children to identify which items are hot and which are not hot.
- Using hot chocolate, show children to look for steam. If there is steam, wait until the drink has cooled off before you drink it.

2. Cool a burn.

Explain to children that if they get burned from something hot they should always tell an adult. Burns should be cooled immediately. Teach children to turn on the cold water tap first, and then the hot tap, to reduce the danger of hot water burns.

Suggested activities:

- Show children the proper procedure for cooling a burn. Teach children to run cool water over a burn and tell an adult.
- Have children pretend that they have a small burn. Teach them to run cold water over the burn.
- Teach children that they should not put ointment or butter on a burn.

3. Tell a grown-up when you find matches or lighters.

Discuss the difference between tools and toys. Explain that matches and lighters are tools for adults to use and not toys to play with. Discuss that matches and lighters make fire. Fire is hot and it can burn and hurt you. Explain that they should tell a grown-up when they find matches and lighters – they should never touch them.

Suggested activities:

- Show a variety of tools and toys such as a hammer, ball, scissors, doll, matches, and a teddy bear. Ask children to identify which are tools and which are toys. Ask children what they should do if they find matches or lighters
- Read children's stories which illustrate the danger of matches, lighters, and cigarettes.
- Talk about the danger of cigarettes, matches, and lighters that may start house and forest fires.

4. Stop, drop, and roll if your clothes catch on fire.

Discuss fire safety and the dangers of being too close to a fire. Explain and demonstrate “stop, drop, and roll”. Explain that rolling smothers the flames. Teach children to cover their face with hands to prevent burns to their face.

Suggested activities:

- Brainstorm with children how their clothes could catch on fire.
- Demonstrate “stop, drop, and roll”.
- Give each child a red felt flame and ask the children to place the flame on their clothing and then perform “stop, drop, and roll” to put the flame out.

5. Know the sound of a smoke alarm.

Discuss what a smoke alarm is and what it does. Explain that the smoke alarm will warn them if there is a fire by smelling the smoke and sounding the alarm.

Suggested activities:

- Show children where the smoke alarms are located. Discuss smoke alarms in children’s homes. Where are they located? Do the children know what they sound like?
- Press the test button of your smoke alarm so that the children can hear its sound.
- Open the smoke alarm. Identify and explain in very simple terms the various parts of the smoke alarm – the nose, battery, and beeper. Explain the purpose of the test button and prepare children for the loud sound. Sound the alarm by pushing the test button.

6. Get Low and Go under smoke.

Explain to children that if they hear a smoke alarm their job is to get out of the building they are in and stay out. Explain that if there is smoke, they must stay low because the bad smelly air is up and the cleaner air is lower.

Suggested activities:

- Demonstrate the Get Low and Go Under Smoke procedure. Have the children practice getting low under a blanket or a sheet of pretend smoke while the smoke alarm is sounding.

7. Practice an escape plan.

Explain to children the importance of practicing the escape plan so that each person will know exactly what to do. Remind children that when the smoke alarm sounds their job is to get out of the building they are in and stay out, and to never hide. Mark the regular and emergency escape routes, as well as windows, doors, stairs, halls.

Suggested activities:

- Photocopy the escape plan for your home based childcare setting. Have children practice the escape plan together.
- Pre-arrange a place to meet outside after escaping. Have children practice meeting there. If unsure where to meet, discuss this with the fire department.
- Send a copy of the escape plan home with children.

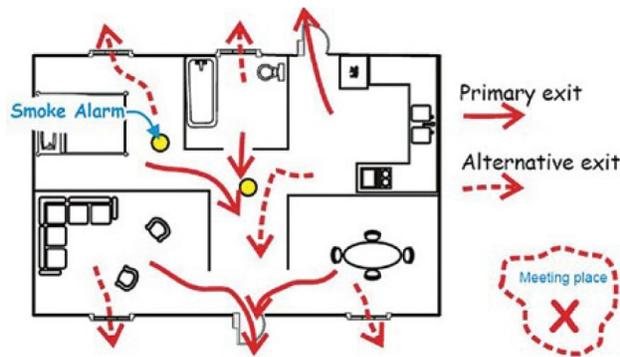
8. Recognize the fire fighter as a helper.

Sometimes children are scared or shy around firefighters, especially if they are in full gear with masks and helmets. Make sure they know that firefighters are there to help and are their friends.

Suggested activities:

- • Invite a fire fighter from your local fire department to speak with the children about fire safety.
- • Visit your local fire department.
- • Participate in your National Fire Prevention Week activities.
- • The Learn Not to Burn Preschool Programs is excellent and is highly recommended. Available through the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs 1-800-668-2955.

Emergency Preparedness



It is important for childcare providers to prepare for emergencies because one could occur while children are in your care.

Emergencies happen anytime, anywhere, without warning, but there are things you can do to make emergency situations a little easier to deal with. Be ready to respond to any emergency situation.

Plan Ahead:

- Know the risks to your geographical area (floods, fires, earthquakes etc.)
- What will you do if an emergency occurs while children are in your care? How might your response vary depending upon the type of emergency?
- Where will you take the children to minimize the risk of injury?
- In case an emergency requires relocation, do you have secondary sites and emergency transportation lined up? Do you have portable records/supplies?
- What will you say to the children to reduce their fears and increase their safety?
- How will you communicate with parents and local authorities? What will you do if phone lines or cell phone towers are down/circuits are busy?

Prepare:

- Identify safe places to take children. Consider locations out in the open, such as a nearby park, that are away from building structures and power lines. When identifying an alternative building as a safe zone, be sure to include personnel from that location in your emergency planning to ensure all parties are aware of the plan.
- Identify safe routes to and from your alternate, safe sites.
- Prepare children for emergencies through informative yet non-threatening activities.
- Practice your emergency plan.
- Provide parents with your emergency plan and emergency preparedness materials list for their home.
- An emergency supplies kit.

What to put in your Emergency Supplies Kit

Food/water

- Store at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food. Choose foods that require no refrigeration, cooking, or preparation and are compact and lightweight. Remember the can opener! • Check your food supply periodically to make sure they haven't expired or aren't leaking or dented. Replace if necessary.
- Plan on four litres of water per person per day. Change the water supply every six months so it stays fresh.

First Aid Kit

- Keep a complete first aid kit in your home and car.

Miscellaneous

- Emergency phone numbers. Consider obtaining out of Province contact numbers for family or friends of children in your care. If local phone services are unavailable due to an emergency, you may be able to use long-distance lines to re- connect.
- Blankets, extra clothing and footwear.
- Hand sanitizer.
- Battery operated or hand crank generator radio and flashlight. Replace batteries often.
- Candles and matches or lighter.
- A whistle (in case you need to attract attention)
- Toilet paper and other personal care supplies.
- Think about including small games, books, a stuffed animal, paper, and crayons.
- Include things that a child may find comfort in while possibly being separated from family members (i.e. a note from mom & dad, a family photo).

Storage Suggestions

- Store the supplies in an easy-to-carry object such as a large, covered trash container, camping backpack, or a duffle bag. Seal food in plastic bags and/or tightly lidded containers.
- Store in a safe, convenient place. If possible, it should be a cool, dry, dark location. Keep a smaller version of your emergency supplies kit in the trunk of your car.
- Keep items or groups of items, in water-proof and air tight plastic bags.

Prepare Yourself for Any Emergency

- Take CPR and First Aid training and stay current.
- Know what resources are available like doctors, hospitals, fire department, ambulance, poison control.
- Know where an alternate site might be for temporary shelter. Prepare for All types of Emergencies!

Additional Educational Resources and Educational Material

Rescue Rangers

15 minute video: Safety rules are presented by animated favorites, Chip 'N Dale. Children are taught positive behaviors that can prevent dangerous fires from happening.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pY4rEq_M1sY&t=5s

Sparky the Fire Dog

Fire Safety Fun for Preschoolers: Fun-filled activity book, challenges children to learn important fire safety lessons (Ages 4-5).

<https://catalog.nfpa.org/Fire-Safety-Fun-for-Preschoolers-Coloring-Activity-Book-P15351.aspx>

Sparky's Activity Book

Puzzles and questions to answer about important fire safety basics (Grades 2-4)

<https://catalog.nfpa.org/Sparkys-Activity-Book-P15350.aspx>

Sparky's Fire Safety Colouring Book

This creative booklet provides an easy way to teach young children about fire safety (Grades K-3).

<https://catalog.nfpa.org/Sparkys-Coloring-Book-P15346.aspx>

Sparky's ABC'S of Fire Safety Comic Book

Fire Safety lessons based on the National Fire Protection Association video/film (Grades K-3).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gHrPLeKzLg4>

Canadian Association for Fire Chiefs

1-800-668-2955

www.nfpa.org www.caafc.ca

Sparky's ABCs of Fire Safety - 9 minute video Presents fire safety behaviours using cartoon characters, music, and songs.

<https://catalog.nfpa.org/Sparkys-ABCs-of-Fire-Safety-Video-P15770.aspx>

Fire Marshals Public Fire Safety Council 100 Strowger Blvd. Brockville, ON, K6V 5W8 1-866-379-6668

www.firesafetycouncil.com

IFSTA, Fire and Life Safety Educator Manual and Resource Kit Comprehensive resource for all those interested in public education. The manual highlights planning, delivering and evaluating public education programs. The resource kit provides activities, graphics, and other tools to enhance program delivery.

<https://www.ifsta.org/shop/fire-and-life-safety-educator-3rd-ed/36620>

Fire and Safety Training Division, Justice Institute of British Columbia

715 McBride Blvd., New Westminster, BC V3L 5T4 Telephone: (604) 528-5657 Fax: (604) 528-5660

Learn Not to Burn® Preschool Program

The Learn Not to Burn® Preschool Program is a practical program to teach fire safety awareness and skills to children aged 3-5. The program provides detailed lesson plans for the eight key fire safety behaviours featured. Learn Not to Burn® is a registered trademark of the NFPA. Available for purchase from the National Fire Protection Association.

One Battery March Park, Quincy, MA 02269-9101 Phone: 617-770-3000

www.nfpa.org

Annex Bookstore, Education and Training Materials

105 Donly Drive S., Simcoe, ON N3Y 4L2 Phone: 877-267-3473

www.annexweb.com/bookstore

BIC Play Safe - Be Safe

Multimedia fire safety educational program for children ages 3-5. Developed by the BIC Corporation in cooperation with educators and fire safety experts, 20 minute video featuring my friend the fire fighter, stop, drop and roll, crawl low under smoke, and match/lighter safety.

BIC Corporation 1 Grove Street, Suite #210, Pittsford, NY 14534 Phone: 716-385-3370

https://us.bic.com/en_us/flick-it-safely-play-safe-be-safe