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# FIRE PREVENTION WEEK - Oct. 3-9

## PREPARE FOR A FIRE WELL IN ADVANCE SAYS LOCAL FIRE DEPT.

"Get out and stay out: your fire safe response." That's this year's message for Fire Prevention Week, which runs Oct. 3 to 9. The goal of the public awareness and education campaign is to reduce loss of life and to prevent burn injuries and damage caused by fire.

Many people die in their homes each year because their smoke alarms don't work and they become trapped. To avoid unnecessary tragedies, test your alarm regularly and make sure you and your family members are fully aware of escape routes. Practise your home escape plan with your family and always have a second route in the event the first one is blocked. Local fire chief Bill Brown has a special message on fire prevention for residents.

"This is the time of year when people start cleaning up the yard and putting the barbecue away. From time to time we've found people who store their propane tank indoors, sometimes in the basement, and that's extremely dangerous," he warned. A leak in the tank could cause the gas to explode, destroying your home and resulting in injury or death for those inside. "Those tanks should always be kept outdoors," stressed Brown.

## WHAT'S IT LIKE TO HAVE A CHIMNEY FIRE?

It's no fun! If it doesn't burn the house down, it will probably wreck your chimney and scare you half to death. Here's how it happens:

Begin with one dirty chimney - let's say a fireplace not cleaned for a couple of years. The soot lining in the chimney is saturated with flammable creosote. (More detail on creosote is available in any dictionary. It doesn't take much to ignite creosote - a newspaper fire sending flames up the damper is enough. Once kindled, creosote burns with joyous abandon. In a matter of seconds, the fire spreads up through the flue and creates a draft that only helps things along.

At this point, your average chimney fire begins to roar and howl, sounding for all the world like a rocket taking off in your living room!

If you run, you'll be treated to a real fireworks show. As the creosote burns, it actually peels and curls off the inside walls of the chimney. This blazing inferno then drips into the flue forming red hot balls that are whisked up in the tremendous updraft.

Like a giant roman candle, it shoots molten balls of fire out the chimney and onto the roof. If you're lucky, the chimney will fall apart destroying one end of the building - if you're not, this miniature volcano can bring the whole house down.

However, if you stand your ground, a chimney fire can be controlled. Call the fire department. Put out the fire in the fireplace with an extinguisher or sand. Cover the opening with a wet blanket (quickest source is the toilet) and hope for the best. But it should be pointed out that having your chimney cleaned is a lot easier on the nerves than the sand and wet blanket method.

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