

A Note from the Township of Norwich Fire Service:

Every year in Ontario, people die in fires that could have been prevented. These fires occur in homes and communities just like ours. Tragically, in many of these fatal fires, there is no smoke alarm warning to alert the occupants and give them the precious seconds they need to safely escape.

As Fire Chief, I am very disturbed by these facts because I know that most home fires can be prevented by taking care when cooking, smoking, using candles or heating your home. I also know that most of those lives could have been saved if the homeowners had installed smoke alarms in their homes and kept them in good working order. The Township of Norwich Fire Service continues to do everything within our power to prevent a fire tragedy from happening here.

I am sure Mayor and Council join me in urging all residents of the Township of Norwich to make certain they have working smoke alarms on every storey of their homes and outside all sleeping areas. This is the law in Ontario. For homeowners, tenants and individual landlords, non-compliance with the Fire Code smoke alarm requirements will result in a ticket for \$235 or a fine of up to \$50,000. Compare this with the cost of a smoke alarm, which can be as little as \$10.

When someone dies in a fire, it is a tremendous loss to the family, the fire department and the entire community. No one ever wants to read in the local paper of a resident of the Township of Norwich dying in a fire. Help protect yourself and your family from fire by installing the required number of smoke alarms, testing them every month and replacing the batteries once a year.

There are times when smoke from a toaster, an open oven door or even from a shower can cause a smoke alarm to activate. This is referred to as a nuisance alarm. To stop the annoying sound, people often remove the battery or disconnect the power source and then forget to reconnect it. Disabling the smoke alarm means if a fire were to occur at a later time, the smoke alarm would not sound and the occupants may not have time they need to safely escape. Every year, people needlessly die in fires in homes without working smoke alarms.

There is good reason why the sound of a smoke alarm is good and loud and persistent: it is intended to get your attention when there is a fire. It can't do this without power. Do not take the battery out or disconnect the power if you experience nuisance alarms. There are alternatives that can help solve the problem for good.

Here are a few simple steps you can take that could eliminate some nuisance alarms caused by cooking activities:

- Keep ovens and stovetop burners clean;
- Clean out accumulations of crumbs in the bottom of toasters and try turning down the timer setting; and
- Use the fan on the range hood when cooking to help remove steam and combustion particles from the air.

Anyone who has questions about smoke alarms or other fire safety issues are welcome to contact the Township of Norwich Fire Service at 519-485-3910.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Darell Parker', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Darell Parker
Fire Chief