

## Project Zero to help reduce fire and carbon monoxide deaths as City kicks off Fire Prevention Week

**Oct. 2, 2020** — With a little help from Enbridge Gas, St. Catharines Fire Services is acting to ensure vulnerable citizens are protected in the event of a fire or from carbon monoxide.

On Thursday, Oct. 1, St. Catharines Fire Service received 420 combination smoke and carbon monoxide alarms through Project Zero, a public education campaign that this year will provide 7,500 such alarms for distribution by 35 municipal fire departments in Ontario. In St. Catharines the alarms will be distributed through partner agencies focussed on assisting seniors, individuals living with disabilities and those facing financial hardships.

Partner agencies include:

- Community Care
- Start Me Up Niagara
- The John Howard Society,
- Meals on Wheels Thorold-St. Catharines
- Niagara Gatekeepers
- The St. Catharines Dunlop Senior Center

The donation comes as the City kicks off Fire Prevention Week , this year focussing on kitchen fire safety. Fire prevention officers will be visiting schools to drop off educational materials, and an online recipe contest is being hosted at [engagestc.ca/FPW](https://engagestc.ca/FPW).

“Working smoke and carbon monoxide alarms are critical during an emergency,” said St. Catharines Fire Services Chief Jeff McCormick,” adding, “during a fire seconds count, and the early warning provided by alarms can be all that stands between residents and serious injury or death. This support will help us educate residents and provide alarms to those in need.”

When properly installed and maintained, combination smoke and carbon monoxide alarms help provide early warning of a house fire or carbon monoxide exposure. Carbon monoxide is a toxic, odourless gas that is a by-product of incomplete combustion of many types of common fuels.

The Ontario Fire Code requires working smoke alarms on every storey of a home and outside all sleeping areas. Carbon monoxide alarms are required outside sleeping areas in homes containing a wood-burning fireplace, fuel-burning appliances such as gas furnaces, gas stoves or gas water heaters or an attached storage garage.

“Carbon monoxide is known as the ‘silent killer’ for a reason, and we have proof that prevention saves lives. We know that the best way to avoid carbon monoxide exposure is to eliminate it at the source by properly maintaining fuel-burning equipment, and that the alarms are a critical second line of defense to protect against carbon monoxide poisoning,” says Bike Balkanci, Director of GTA West / Niagara Region Operations for Enbridge Gas.

This year, Enbridge Gas invested \$225,000 in Project Zero, and over the past 12 years, the program has provided more than 50,000 alarms to Ontario fire departments.

“The objective of Project Zero is to deliver combination smoke and carbon monoxide alarms to Ontario communities who need them the most,” says Jon Pegg, Ontario Fire Marshal. “It’s a program that fire departments can adopt to help educate their communities about the requirement for all Ontario homes to have a CO alarm if they have a fuel-burning appliance or an attached garage.”

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