



**October 30, 2017**

## **LANDLORD CHARGED FOR FAILING TO MAINTAIN ALARMS**

**HALTON HILLS, ON** – On the morning of Friday October 20, 2017, Halton Hills firefighters responded to a report of a basement fire at a Regional Road 25 address. Upon arrival to the single-storey single family home, a mother and child directed firefighters to the basement where the woman had attempted to extinguish the fire.

Upon entry to the basement, firefighters encountered heavy smoke conditions and were hampered from reaching the seat of the fire by the excessive amount of combustible material stored in the basement area. Once located, staff confirmed the fire was extinguished, ensured there was no further extension of the fire, and then conducted ventilation procedures to clear smoke from the building. At no time during this event did staff hear the sounds of any smoke or carbon monoxide (CO) alarms.

Halton Emergency Medical Services (EMS) was called to the scene to attend to the mother for smoke inhalation and minor burns to her hands. After being assessed by EMS staff the mother declined transport to hospital and was released.

This family was very fortunate that the mother had been up at the time of the fire and went to investigate a whiff of smoke from the basement stairwell, as there were no working smoke and CO alarms in the building. If they been asleep (with no early notification by a smoke or CO alarm), the residents would surely have succumbed to the fire. Prior to leaving the scene, new smoke and CO alarms were installed by firefighters. Damage was estimated at under \$5,000.00.

Fire Chief John deHooge reminds everyone that, “Working smoke alarms are required on every floor of the home and near the bedrooms, and CO alarms are required near the sleeping area where there is a fuel fired appliance in the home or has an attached garage. In the case where a landlord is involved it is their responsibility to provide and maintain these devices. It’s the law.”

The fire cause investigation revealed that the fire started in a plastic basket located near a freezer. Placed on the basket were the connection ends of the extension cords where scene reconstruction found that the fire started as the result of improper use and overloading of extension cords, which powered the freezer causing the connections to overheat and start the fire.

Since the fire, the homeowner has considerably diminished the amount of combustible storage in the home and electricians have been on site to correct electrical deficiencies and upgrade the service so that extension cord use is minimized and system is safe.

“This incident really hit home for me,” said Mayor Bonnette. “I have de-cluttered my house and checked my electrical cords too. I’ll be adding these tasks to my to-do list when I change the batteries in my smoke and CO alarms.”

At the conclusion of the fire investigation the landlord was issued two tickets for failing to maintain smoke alarms and for failure to maintain CO alarms, which carry a fine of \$360.00 each.

Landlords are responsible for ensuring their rental units contain the appropriate smoke and CO alarms, and that they are maintained in working order for the safety of tenants. Residents or landlords requiring assistance with the requirements of smoke and CO alarms can call the Fire Department Prevention Division at 905-877-1133.

### **About the Town of Halton Hills**

The Town of Halton Hills, with a population of approximately 60,000, consists of two urban centres, Georgetown and Acton, with three hamlets – Glen Williams, Stewarttown and Norval – and several smaller settlements. Halton Hills has long been recognized for its natural beauty, active agricultural community, high quality of life and proximity to major centres, including Brampton, Mississauga and Toronto. The Town is ranked as one of the top small communities in Canada by a national magazine.

### **Communications Contact:**

Alex Fuller,  
Manager of Corporate Communications  
905-873-2601, ext. 2412  
afuller@haltonhills.ca

### **Media Contact:**

Harry Olivieri  
Deputy Chief, Prevention & Public Education  
Halton Hills Fire Department  
905-873-2601, ext 2102  
[harryo@haltonhills.ca](mailto:harryo@haltonhills.ca)