

1. Introductory letter from Acting Fire Commissioner

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**Message from the Acting Fire Commissioner**

**Every Second Counts. Plan Two Ways Out!**

*October 8, 2017, marks the beginning of this year's Fire Prevention Week*

The Fire Service in North America has, since 1911, chosen to provide additional emphasis on fire safety, fire prevention and public education during the week in that contains October 9, which marks the anniversary of the "Great Chicago Fire" in 1871, which resulted in the deaths of over 300 people, destroyed much of the city, leaving 100,000 Chicago residents without a home.

Our sincere hope is that this annual Fire Prevention Week campaign will not only encourage families to take the time to review their fire safety practises, test their smoke alarms and practise their fire escape plan at the time of the campaign, but that these messages will result in establishing more ingrained fire-safe behaviours and regular practises throughout the year.

In 2017, we chose the Fire Prevention Week theme of "Every Second Counts. Plan Two Ways Out!" to reinforce that, when families react to a fire event based on plans and practise, they are more likely to get out of their home safely. Knowing what to do and where to go – especially when your primary escape route is blocked by fire, heat or smoke – can save lives and prevent serious injury.

Real world experience, backed up by laboratory testing, has consistently confirmed that residents may have less than three minutes from the activation of their smoke alarm to exit a burning residence and emphasizes the benefits of having a secondary escape route planned. As such, the Government of Alberta has advocated the use of the Three Minute Drill for residents since 2007.

I strongly encourage all Albertans, in conjunction with their partners, children, family members, tenants and neighbours, to ensure they have drafted, discussed and practised their fire escape plans. These plans need to be specific to your residence and take into account its type and location, as well as the usability of the identified escape routes. Your local fire department and the Office of the Fire Commissioner are always ready and willing to answer any fire safety questions and provide additional guidance upon request. Our goal is the same as yours: to ensure you are prepared in the event of a fire and to help everyone get out safely.

Yours in safety,

Kevan D. Jess  
Acting Fire Commissioner  
Provincial Fire Administrator  
Office of the Fire Commissioner  
Alberta Municipal Affairs