

# HOMEPRO REPORTER

## PROTECTING HOMES FROM WILDFIRE

2003 was a remarkable year for forest fires. Hundreds of homes have been lost in so called "interface fires" around the British Columbia interior. With suggestions that 2004 may be just as severe, the following recommendations may help to reduce the risk of homes being damaged or destroyed due to an interface fire.

1. Create a 10 meter fire break around the house. Remove tall tree, overhanging branches, dry brush, leaves, needles and other "fuel" within this area.
2. Clean leaves and needles from the gutters and roof regularly.
3. Store flammable materials (firewood, propane cylinders, etc.) well away from any buildings.
4. Do not attach wood fences to the house.
5. Add spark arrestor screens to wood burning chimneys.
6. Install fire resistant signage (house numbers) to allow fire fighters to easily locate the property.
7. Prune low level branches up to 2.5 meters above ground, from all trees on the property.
8. Ensure that all attic and crawlspace vents have non-combustible mesh screens.
9. When re-roofing replace wood shakes with less flammable materials (ie. asphalt shingles, metal roofing or concrete tiles).
10. During exterior renovations consider stucco or masonry wall cladding rather than wood or vinyl siding.



Vernon  
545-7071

## SMOKE DETECTORS WORK...SOMETIMES!

There is no argument that smoke detectors work in reducing fatalities. In fact, the chance of dying in a home without a smoke detector is twice as great as in a home with one! However, they must be properly placed and maintained to work effectively.

- Install one detector on each level and one in each bedroom.
- Detectors should be installed on ceilings or within 6"-12" of the ceilings.
- Avoid dead air spaces such as corners and roof peaks.
- Test the detector at least once a month.
- Never disable a smoke detector even during nuisance alarms.
- Replace batteries at least once a year.
- Vacuum the detector once a month.
- Replace detectors that are more than 10 year old.



## MEN AT HIGHER RISK OF DYING BY FIRE!

Did you know that the risk of death by fire is almost twice as great for men as it is for women? Of all fire deaths, 66% are male while 34% are female.

Accidental house fires account for 83.3% of all fire deaths in British Columbia

Kelowna  
861-1802

## WOOD STOVES CONTINUE TO BE A MAJOR CONCERN FOR INSURANCE COMPANIES

With heating equipment being a major cause of residential fires, insurance companies want assurances that the wood stoves are properly installed prior to supplying insurance. Have you found yourself trying to find a wood stove inspection right after a home inspection has been performed?

At **HOMEPRO**, we have inspectors who can perform a WETT Inspection on wood stoves for a small additional fee. If the installation complies with CSA Standard B-365, we provide a letter of approval accepted by insurance companies. Just let us know when booking the inspection that a wood stove inspection is needed.

## NEW ARC FAULT BREAKERS BATTLE A MAJOR CAUSE OF RESIDENTIAL FIRES

Approximately one third of all electrical fires are caused by arcing. Arcs are the sparks or loud "pops" commonly associated with a "short". When the spark "jumps", the flame has a temperature in excess of 6000 degrees Celsius.

Arc faults occur for many reasons such as worn electrical insulation or damaged wire, inappropriate or damaged appliance cords and equipment, loose electrical connections, or simply driving a nail into a wall and having it inadvertently hit a wire. The possibility of arcing grows in aged homes as time tend to contribute to the possible existence of these conditions. The danger further increases when an arc occurs in the presence of combustible materials often found in a home (wood frame construction, carpets, furniture etc). Often, the arc fault current may not be consistent enough or high enough to trip the traditional circuit breaker. For this reason, the latest Canadian Electrical Code requires Arc Fault Breakers on circuits feeding the bedrooms.

## FIRES DON'T JUST HAPPEN IN THE HILLS!

Of all fires in Canada in 2000, 39% were residential fires. Of all financial losses due to fire, residences account for 45% of the total.

The major causes of fire are:

- Cooking Equipment 15%
- Heating Equipment 13%
- Electrical 11%
- Smoking 11%

While most fires start in the kitchen, most fire fatalities occur in the bedroom.

Penticton  
492-4461