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Smoke alarms: a sound you can live with

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The theme for this year's Fire Prevention Week is Smoke Alarms: A Sound You Can Live With. While the theme is determined by the National Fire Protection Association, it is especially timely for B.C. with the legislation change that occurred in the late spring. Previously, the B.C. Fire Code required smoke alarms in all existing hotels and public buildings, but did not require them in all existing dwelling units, such as private homes. It is now provincial law that everyone must have a functional smoke alarm in their home. The new fire code legislation, which took effect May 1, requires the devices be present in every private home, hotel and motel.

During Fire Prevention Week, Keremeos firefighters will be volunteering their time to help inform the public about fire safety.

On Monday, October 4, primary school students will get a chance to meet the volunteer firefighters during a fire drill and educational fire safety session at the Cawston Primary School. A firefighter wearing turnout gear, facemask and breathing apparatus can be intimidating. It is important to give children the opportunity to see a firefighter in full turnout gear and to learn that underneath the 'Darth Vader' appearance is a trusted community member. Students will be receiving Fire Safety for Kids, a 40-page book that features information on how to avoid fire, plan an escape route and what to do if fire breaks out. Produced by Community Safety Net, Fire Safety for Kids also offers health and first aid information, along with important safety tips for parents, teachers, and babysitters. Included is an educational DVD that features animated characters, interactive games, and quizzes. It connects to the Community Safety Net web site, where kids can enter online contests and win great prizes. The materials have been provided thanks to the generous support of local businesses and organizations.

According to Community Safety Net, house fires are the third leading cause of death among children — mostly as a result of smoke inhalation. Kids start 30 per cent of these fires. Such sobering statistics illustrate the need for fire safety education among young people.

On Saturday, October 9, firefighters will be at the ValuPlus with information on fire safety. Irly Bird has generously donated a fire extinguisher and Similkameen Insurance Agencies and Andrew Sheret LTD have also generously donated other fire safety items for a free draw. Come to ValuPlus and see the firefighters between 10 a.m.-2 p.m. and enter your name to win.

During Saturday, in support of fire prevention and the Keremeos Volunteer Fire Department, Irly Bird is offering 10 per cent off smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors and fire extinguishers.

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