



**Hastings Highlands Fire Department
33011 Hwy 62 North, P.O. Box 130
Maynooth, ON K0L 2S0**

**News Release
December 15, 2020
For Immediate Release**

Hastings Highlands, ON, Canada

KEEP FIRE SAFETY IN MIND THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

With the holiday season upon us, we are entering one of the most festive times of year. But it can also be a deadly time of year.

The Hastings Highlands Fire Department is urging everyone to pay special attention when cooking during the holidays, and to drink responsibly. Provincial statistics reveal that careless cooking is the number one cause of fires and the second leading cause of fatal fires.

“The hustle and bustle of the holidays can dramatically increase your risk of having a fire,” said Fire Prevention Officer Dwayne Meharrie. “All too often, these fires are started by unattended cooking and in many cases, alcohol is involved.”

Smoking is another leading cause of fires during the holiday season. “Make sure smokers extinguish cigarettes in large deep ashtrays- not in plant pots which may contain peat moss or shredded bark that can easily ignite,” continued Fire Prevention Officer Meharrie. “Ashes should be emptied in a metal container, not the garbage can, and put outside.”

The Hastings Highlands Fire Department also is reminding everyone about the law requiring working smoke alarms on every storey of the home and outside all sleeping areas. Take a few minutes to test your smoke alarms and make sure everyone in the home knows exactly what to do if the smoke alarms sound in an emergency. Develop and practice a home escape plan with everyone in the home.

Enjoy the holiday season by following these simple tips:

- Stay in the kitchen when cooking. Cooking is a major cause of home fires, so don't leave the kitchen if there's something cooking on the stove. If a pot catches fire, don't try to move it. Cover the pot with a lid to smother the flames and turn off the burner.
- Keep things that can burn such as cooking utensils and paper towels a safe distance from the stove as they can easily ignite if they are too close.
- Keep an eye on any drinkers in your household and make sure all cigarettes are properly extinguished and the stove is off before going to bed.
- Install and maintain working smoke and carbon monoxide alarms outside all sleeping areas of the home. Smoke alarms also are required on every storey. Failure to comply with the smoke and carbon monoxide alarm requirements can result in a ticket for \$360 or a fine of up to \$50,000 for individuals and \$100,000 for corporations.