

For Immediate Release

ATTENTION: NEWS AND ASSIGNMENT EDITORS

Working Smoke Alarms: It's the Law as of March 1, 2006

TORONTO (February 28, 2006) – A new regulation requiring smoke alarms on every storey as well as outside all sleeping areas of every home will make Ontario an even safer place to live, says Community Safety and Correctional Services Minister Monte Kwinter.

“It’s simple – smoke alarms save lives,” says Kwinter. “Even with the lowest fire death rate in Ontario’s history in 2005, we can all do more to protect our loved ones. Installing smoke alarms on every storey of a home and outside all sleeping areas can ensure your family has the precious seconds needed to escape from a fire. The new regulation that takes effect March 1, 2006 will mean safer homes and safer communities.”

Announced in December, the smoke alarm amendment to the Ontario Fire Code applies to all single family, semi-detached and town homes, whether owner-occupied or rented. It was announced in conjunction with the launch of the Office of the Fire Marshal’s public education campaign, *Working Smoke Alarms: It’s the Law!*, designed to heighten awareness about the importance of working smoke alarms.

“Since 1997, the number of fire deaths has declined by 50 per cent,” said Bernard Moyle, Fire Marshal for Ontario. “Although these numbers reflect a milestone in Ontario’s fire history, people are still losing their lives in fires. We expect that having more smoke alarms in homes will mean earlier warning of fire, which will result in faster escape by occupants, earlier arrival by the fire department and ultimately less risk to firefighters and the public.”

Smoke alarms can be purchased for as little as \$10. Municipal fire departments across Ontario have increased their public education efforts to ensure homeowners are in compliance and will soon be enforcing the new smoke alarm requirements. For homeowners, tenants and individual landlords, non-compliance with the Fire Code smoke alarm requirements can result in a ticket for \$235 or a fine of up to \$50,000.

For more information on smoke alarms and the new requirements, the public is encouraged to contact their local fire department.

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