

Shelburne Fire aims to reduce carbon monoxide deaths

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The Shelburne & District Fire Department and Enbridge Gas have teamed up to reduce fire and carbon monoxide deaths through the Safe Community Project Zero initiative.

Shelburne & District Fire Department has received 174 combination smoke and carbon monoxide alarms through Safe Community Project Zero. Safe Community Project Zero is a public education campaign with the Fire Marshal's Public Fire Safety Council (FMPFSC) that will provide more than 10,000 alarms to residents in 50 municipalities across Ontario.

"With the assistance of this grant, we can better ensure that all of the citizens in our catchment area are safe from the effects of fire and CO [Carbon Monoxide]. We'd also like to remind the public that without a working smoke alarm in your occupancy, you stand very little chance of survival in a fire," said Deputy Fire Chief Jeff Clayton.

In 2023, Enbridge Gas invested \$315,000 into Safe Community Project Zero, and over the past 15 years, the program has provided more than 86,000 alarms to Ontario fire departments.

"Properly maintaining fuel-burning equipment is the best way to reduce potential exposure to carbon monoxide, and an alarm is a critical second line of defence for protection. When we implement these strategies together, we protect our loved ones from carbon monoxide poisoning, also known as the silent killer," said Michael Nash, operations supervisor, GTA West Region, Enbridge Gas.

When properly installed and maintained, combination smoke and carbon monoxide alarms help provide early warnings to safely escape from a house fire or carbon monoxide exposure. Carbon monoxide is a toxic, odourless gas that is a by-product of incomplete combustion of many types of common fuels.

"Across Ontario there is a renewed focus on the importance of having working smoke and carbon monoxide alarms in your home. The objective of Safe Community Project Zero is to deliver these alarms to areas where they are needed most," said Jon Pegg, Ontario Fire Marshal and chair of the FMPFSC. "It's a program that fire departments can adopt to help educate their communities about the requirement for all Ontario homes to have a carbon monoxide alarm if they have a fuel-burning appliance or an attached garage."

The Shelburne & District Fire Department is made up of one full-time chief and 32 volunteer firefighters who serve the communities of Amaranth, Melancthon, Mono, Mulmur and Shelburne.

In 2023, the Shelburne Fire Department responded to 18 structure fires, nine CO alarms with carbon monoxide in the home, and 18 false CO alarms as a result of faulty detectors, failed batteries or other undetermined factors.

"The firefighters here do a fantastic job and this partnership is a great way to get some of these devices out in the community, but perhaps more importantly, just to raise awareness of the importance of having working smoke and CO [Carbon Monoxide] detectors in your home," said Shelburne Mayor Wade Mills.