



Fire Prevention Week is October 4 to 10, 2009

The Fire Prevention Week 2009 theme, "Stay Fire Smart! Don't Get Burned", focuses on burn awareness and prevention, as well as keeping homes safe from the leading causes of home fires. The fire and life safety public educators will focus on simple actions that can be taken to prevent devastating burns.

The history of National Fire Prevention Week has its roots in the great Chicago Fire that occurred on October 8, 1871, and killed some 300 people, left 100,000 homeless and destroyed more than 17,000 structures. The popular story is that a cow knocked over an oil lamp in the O'Leary barn. Although the fire is still undetermined, and it has been established that the O'Leary's were asleep at the time the fire started, the massive fire swiftly took its toll, burning more than 2000 acres in 27 hours.

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) decided that the 40th anniversary of the Great Chicago Fire should be observed not with festivities, but in a way that would keep the public informed about the importance of fire prevention.

In Canada, the first national Fire Prevention Day proclamation was issued by the Governor-General in 1919.

From the beginning, it was apparent that a united effort between Canada and the U.S.A. would give the work greater impetus. To this end fire prevention organizations in both countries have always supported a common date at federal, state, provincial, and municipal levels. Fire Prevention week falls in the week that includes October 8.

British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Yukon fire departments coordinate efforts to reach children in grades 1 to 4 during Fire Prevention Week in order to deliver consistent, accurate fire safety messages with information on preventing fires, knowing what to do in case of a fire, smoke alarms and developing home escape plans. Each year the message is tailored to follow the NFPA theme with activity booklets, lesson plans for teachers, fire safety messages to take home and a contest where one child can win a laptop computer and the school can win \$500. The theme for 2009 is Stay Fire Smart! Don't Get Burned.