

Fires underscore importance of home fire safety

Dec. 22, 2020 — Two recent fires in the City serve as an important reminder to residents concerning the importance of safe practices when it comes to electrical appliances and the operation of barbecues and smokers.

Early last Friday morning, St. Catharines Fire Services responded to a home fire on Linlake Drive that caused \$150,000 in damages and sent one resident to hospital. A subsequent investigation by the Office of the Fire Marshal of Ontario ascertained the source of the fire was a modified space heater in the basement. The space heater had been modified with a spliced electrical cord which is believed to have started the fire which spread to nearby combustible materials.

Residents are reminded that alterations and repairs to electrical appliances should only be undertaken by professionals. Additionally, heat generating appliances should always be operated at a safe distance from combustible materials.

“Electrical devices are everywhere in our homes and are an important part our daily life, so it is important that we all remain aware of the risks that improperly operated or maintained electrical devices can pose,” said Fire Chief Jeff McCormick, adding, “residents should be sure to regularly check electrical cords for exposed or frayed wiring; and have damaged electrical devices replaced or repaired by a trained professional.”

The second fire occurred Saturday evening on Niagara Street, where an outdoor smoker at the rear of the house acted as a fire source, igniting the deck and rear of the home. Residents are reminded to remain aware of the fire risks outdoor cooking appliances can pose.

Under City by-laws barbecues and smokers must be:

- Located at least one metre from any structure or trees
- Located at least three metres from any building opening or intakes
- Located with their cooking surface at least three metres from any overhead objects
- Located nearby a suitable means to extinguish, such as a fire extinguisher

For more on barbecue and smoker fire safety visit www.stcatharines.ca/en/livein/Barbecues-and-Smokers.asp

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