

Let's Talk Care

Fire Safety

At Extendicare, we take fire safety very seriously. Due to the fact that we care for older people who may not be able to move without assistance, we have to be prepared to act quickly. To ensure that staff are prepared to respond to a fire – day or night – Extendicare has developed rigorous fire safety procedures.

Each long-term care centre conducts three fire drills a month, one on each shift, and practices evacuation procedures with residents in fire zone areas. Some drills are announced ahead of time; others may happen without warning. This mix of planned and unplanned drills is an effective way to train staff.

Sometimes the drill held during the night shift will be a silent one; staff go through the procedures without sounding the alarm or disturbing residents. At least once every three to four months, even the night shift must undergo a full drill with the bells ringing.

Some residents complain about the inconvenience of fire drills – and they are inconvenient – but they are also very necessary. We have to be sure that our staff are ready in case of a real emergency.

There is more to fire safety than fire drills:

- ⇒ Each home has its own, personalized, detailed emergency response procedure manual
- ⇒ Each home follows a carefully designed evacuation plan in case of fire
- ⇒ Mandatory fire safety training for staff is one of Extendicare's priorities, and is geared to ensure:
 - Prevention
 - Early detection of fire location
 - Making the building safe until help arrives
 - Evacuation to a safe area, if necessary
- ⇒ Every new staff person receives an orientation to our fire safety program and procedures
- ⇒ We make regular presentations on fire safety to residents and families
- ⇒ Homes annually invite outside fire safety experts to speak to staff and to help organize training sessions
- ⇒ Fire equipment specialists visit every home once a year and inspect fire equipment
- ⇒ Each home is regularly inspected for fire safety by government officials in each province
- ⇒ Where possible, homes are directly hooked to the local fire department or to a surveillance company

- ⇒ Each home regularly inspects its own fire safety equipment (e.g. fire extinguishers, hoses, alarms, smoke detectors, sprinkler systems, emergency lighting, etc.)
- ⇒ Extendicare purchases only flame-retardant curtains, drapes and mattresses
- ⇒ Smoking policies are in effect in all facilities

We do everything we can to keep fires from starting, and to respond quickly if they do. Most important, **the first obligation of our staff is to save lives.**

If you are in the home when the fire alarm sounds, please stay where you are with the resident and wait for instruction from a staff person. Staff will be following a well-planned procedure, and you will be most helpful if you listen and do as they ask.