



News Release



Be "SummerSmart" This Holiday Weekend!

(Toronto, ON, May 19, 2004) The Victoria Day holiday weekend marks the unofficial start of summer – a time to fire up the gas BBQ grill, break out the camping gear or open up the cottage. However, the season brings with it a number of safety concerns. You have a responsibility for your own and your family's safety to be "SummerSmart" to prevent injuries and incidents at home, around the cottage or at the campsite.

The Ontario Fire Marshal's Public Fire Safety Council, the Technical Standards & Safety Authority (TSSA), Ontario's fuels safety regulator, and a coalition of public and private sector partners officially launched the "SummerSmart" program in Toronto today. The province-wide safety program was created to promote greater public awareness of specific safety issues and reduce the number of avoidable incidents each summer.

Joining forces with these partners are Monte Kwinter, Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, Bernard Moyle, Ontario's Fire Marshal, and Terry Boyko, Acting Chief of Toronto Fire Services, who were at the launch at Nathan Philips Square in downtown Toronto to demonstrate their support for this important initiative.

"Preventable injuries are a community problem that affect everyone. Too many people are being injured or killed unnecessarily," said Fire Marshal Moyle. "It's in everyone's interest to prevent incidents and injuries and to enjoy summer activities to the fullest."

In Ontario, over 400 barbecue fires and campfire-related incidents were reported to the Office of the Fire Marshal between 1998 and 2002, causing estimated combined property losses of over \$4 million. In 2002, TSSA investigated 37 propane incidents, which resulted in four serious injuries and six fatalities. Human error was a direct cause in 45% of these incidents. Examples of human error included use of portable camp heaters in unventilated areas, such as tents and campers, and poor maintenance of fuel-burning refrigerators in cottages.

"Changing behaviour to prevent incidents and injuries doesn't happen overnight," said TSSA President and CEO Margaret Kelch. "It takes the ongoing commitment of all our safety partners working together to deliver program like "SummerSmart" to ensure that safety information is being delivered effectively to the greatest number of people possible."

"SummerSmart" provides safety materials focusing on:

- The safe handling of propane, gasoline, kerosene and other fuels commonly used outdoors.
- Practicing proper procedures and following the manufacturer's instructions when using gas barbecues and other fuel-burning appliances.
- Recognizing and preventing carbon monoxide hazards at home, around the cottage or at the campsite.

The "SummerSmart" safety program provides this important safety information through a number of communication channels including a new Web site: **www.safetyinfo.ca**, downloadable safety lesson plans for Ontario teachers and safety kits distributed to approximately 900 communities via fire stations (including a 32 page safety handbook, a twelve page activity/colouring book for children, posters, giveaways and Public Service Announcements). A follow-up fall program is scheduled and continued programs are planned for the future.

The official "SummerSmart" launch at Nathan Philips Square featured a giant BBQ lunch – cooked on Ontario's biggest gas barbecue, courtesy of Union Gas, for local schoolchildren and the public. Toronto firefighters and the "SummerSmart" safety partners from **CSA International, Direct Energy Essential Home Services, Garrison (exclusively at Canadian Tire), Energizer Canada, Kidde and State Farm Insurance** were also on hand to deliver important public safety messages to the children and visitors alike.

For more important advice about safety issues around your home and at leisure, visit **www.safetyinfo.ca** and take our online safety quiz and qualify to "Be Safety Smart and Win!" You can win many great prizes including:

- 1 of 4 weekends for two from **Holiday Inn™** in Canada
- 1 of 5 Cooling Protection Plans from **Direct Energy™**
- 1 of 20 Home Safety Kits from **Garrison™**

-##-

Media Contacts:

Tom Zach, Manager, Communications, Technical Standards and Safety Authority
(416) 325-0113 / Cell: (416) 274-5842/ email: tzach@tssa.org

Bev Gilbert, Public Education and Media Relations Manager, Office of the Fire Marshal
(416) 325-03178 / email: bev.gilbert@jus.gov.on.ca

