



Attention News Editors:

Insurance brokers team up with the Fire Service for Fire Prevention Week, October 4-10, 2009

VANCOUVER – September 30, 2009 – Every year, hundreds of British Columbians lose their lives, homes and valuables to common, every-day fire hazards that could have been prevented, such as leaving cooking unattended.

This year, the Insurance Brokers Association of B.C. (IBABC), which serves as the voice of the general insurance brokerage industry, is teaming up with the British Columbia Fire Commissioner's Office in a bid to spread the word about fire safety during Fire Prevention Week, October 4-10, 2009.

"IBABC brokers meet face-to-face with residents and see firsthand the loss and devastation that arises from house fires. Most fires result from every-day hazards that we take for granted for the sake of time and convenience, and in some cases, oversight," said Lorne Perry, President of IBABC and a broker in Port Moody.

Studies show that adults take fire safety more seriously when trying to instill awareness and fire-safe behavior in children.

"Fire safety may seem obvious and easily preventable to most people, but often times adults take it more seriously when they see how focused and involved their children are about protecting the home and family," said Perry.

To help instill awareness and engage children, grades K-3 in schools around B.C. will receive posters, fun and colorful activity booklets and fire chief for a day materials.

"The lessons children learn, in the *Fire Safety Start with You* booklet will lead to life-long fire safe attitudes and behaviors", said Fire Commissioner Rebecca Denlinger. "Activity booklets are completed at school and then taken home to involve the child's family in a discussion about fire safety."

This year's theme is "Stay Fire Smart – Don't Get Burned!" For more information about fire safety or Fire Prevention Week, contact your local Fire Department or insurance broker.

About IBABC

The Insurance Brokers Association of B.C. serves as the voice of the general insurance brokerage industry and promotes its members as the premier distributors of insurance products and services in British Columbia. IBABC is the primary provider of pre-licensing and continuing professional education for the general insurance brokers in B.C. IBABC represents the interests of the public and its member brokers to government and to industry stakeholders.

IBABC represents in excess of 700 property and casualty insurance brokerages that in turn employ more than 8,000 people in approximately 140 B.C. communities. Member offices are the consumer's choice for the vast majority of all property and casualty insurance policies and premiums written in the province. Consumer satisfaction with their insurance brokers is high. In survey after survey, consumers report that they value their brokers' knowledge, professional advice, unbiased review of their needs and coverage options, and service and advocacy in the event of a claim. IBABC member brokerages have an average of 13 staff members and therefore fit within the small to medium-sized enterprise (SME) category.

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Fact Sheet

- Cooking is the leading cause of home fires. The majority of stovetop fires happen because cooking was left unattended.
- Heating is the leading cause of reported, home fires during the winter months of December, January and February.
- Smoking materials are the leading cause of fire deaths and the third leading cause of home fire injuries.
- Children under the age of 6 years old are the most likely to start fires while playing with matches and lighters.
- Electrical distribution equipment is the fifth leading cause of home fires and the sixth leading cause of home fire deaths.
- Visit <http://www.gov.bc.ca/>, <http://www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/firecom/> or www.firepreventionweek.org to find out more about Fire Prevention Week, Oct. 4-10, 2009.
- To find out more about fire safety or other home-related hazards, visit www.bestinsurance.ca.
- To find the nearest IBABC broker, visit: http://www.ibabc.org/consum/consum_select_finder.asp



10 Tips for Fire Safety:

1. Keep an eye on the stovetop. Never leaving cooking unattended and keep a close eye on food cooking in the oven. Keep a pan lid or cookie sheet nearby in case a fire suddenly erupts.
2. Give space heaters space. Fixed and portable space heaters should be kept at least one metre (three feet) away from anything that can burn.
3. Smokers should take extra precaution. Try to smoke outdoors or use sturdy, deep ashtrays and make sure cigarette butts and ashes are out before disposing of them.
4. Matches and lighters are not toys. Keep them out of reach and sight from children, high up in a locked cabinet.
5. Inspect electrical cords and make sure they are not stretched or pinched behind furniture and under rugs. Replace cords that have cracked and frayed or have broken or loose plugs.
6. Be careful of candle use, never leave the room or go to sleep with a burning candle and keep them away from the reach of children and flammable objects and furniture.
7. Plan an escape route and practice your plan at least twice a year so everyone is prepared in case of an emergency.
8. Get your smoke alarms in shape. Install one on every level and ensure that everyone in the household can hear them sound, even with closed doors.
9. Test your smoke alarm and replace your batteries once a year. Smoke alarms older than ten years should be replaced.
10. Get low and go. In the event of fire and heavy smoke, crawl low on your hands and knees to your exit, keeping your head 0.3 to 0.6 metres (one to two feet) above the floor where the air is cleaner.

For more tips about fire safety, visit www.bestinsurance.ca or contact your insurance broker.