

Cold weather increases the risk of fires

by KRISTENA SCHUTT-MOORE

Staff

With the chain of snow storms and temperatures dropping past minus 30 degrees celsius Bancroft This Week reached out to the Bancroft fire department about fire safety measures as people find ways to keep warm. As always we also encourage residents to ensure they keep their chimneys clean and free of creosote, dispose of ash safely by removing them from the home and covering them with snow to ensure they are fully extinguished, says deputy fire chief and fire prevention officer Matt Musclow. Ensure you have working smoke and carbon monoxide alarms and are testing them monthly. Ensure they are keeping exits from

their homes free of items and snow to ensure a quick evacuation of the home if required in a fire. Plan and practice a

home escape plan so everyone in the home knows where to

evacuate to in the event of a fire. Know your address so if

you have to call 911 they can get to you as quickly as possible. Keep your 911 number clear from snow and debris so

it can be found easily by first responders. In case of emergencies the department suggests that all homes have two ways out, with the snow cleared from all driveways and paths. This is important for both the residents of the home to escape and for emergency services to gain the best access to the house/building and those who may need their help. Another concern with winter weather is power outages. In these circumstances it is often best to use flashlights, have battery operated lighting and fresh batteries on hands.

Candles can pose a risk of fires starting. Having enough supplies, including food and water that will last over 72 hours, is

good to have on hand as in some large emergencies emergency crews may have to attend several calls in the community.

Alternative power should also have a close eye kept on

them. All generators should be used outdoors and kept away from windows and doors. Do not run a generator in a garage, even with the door open as fumes can still seep into the house. Using emergency heat sources can also cause issues. Be sure that all heaters have everything moved away from them up to three feet. If there is no one in the room where the heater is located, turn it off. Nearly half of all space heater fires involve electric space heaters. But that does not mean that other heaters do not pose their own risks. There are more home fires in winter than in any other season. Half of all home heating fires happen in December, January and February. The Bancroft Fire Department asks that all residents stay cozy and warm this winter season, but also stay fire smart.