



Home Fire and Burn Prevention Education Curriculum



Acknowledgements

Original Program

Get to Know Fire is the result of considerable time and effort from several experienced professionals working in the fire service. The program was originally published in 2002 as “Getting to Know Fire” and has been used in fire departments across British Columbia for over two decades. The original program was developed by a Curriculum Development Task Group established under the British Columbia Public Fire and Life Safety Education Advisory Committee and published by the Office of the Fire Commissioner.

The Office of the Fire Commissioner would like to acknowledge the significant contributions to the original program made by the members of the Curriculum Development Task Group – Barb Kidd, Bob Stevens, Charlene Jordan-Jones and Rita Paine – and the support of their fire departments.

Program Update

A substantial update of *Get to Know Fire* has been completed as of October 2023. The program’s lesson plans and resources have been refreshed to include current best practices regarding fire prevention and response, as well as modern language that is inclusive of all audiences. The updates were made in consultation with members of the *Get to Know Fire* Working Group, which included representatives from:

- BC Fire Training Officers’ Association
- BC Professional Fire Fighters Burn Fund
- Fire Chiefs’ Association of BC
- Fire Prevention Officers’ Association of BC
- FireSmart BC / BC Wildfire Service
- First Nations’ Emergency Services Society (FNESS)
- Justice Institute of British Columbia
- National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)
- Volunteer Firefighters’ Association of BC

The Office of the Fire Commissioner would like to thank the *Get to Know Fire* Working Group for their contributions to the updated program.

We would also like to thank all the organizations that have generously contributed supplementary materials and videos that are referenced in *Get to Know Fire*, including:

- AboutKidsHealth
- Brampton Fire and Emergency Services
- FireSmart BC
- Fire Safety Research Institute
UL Research Institutes
- Government of Western Australia
Department of Fire and Emergency Services
- Justice Institute of British Columbia
- Kelowna Fire Department
- National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)
- WorkBC



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Introduction

Most fires are preventable. Educating the public about how to prevent fires from starting in the first place is one of the key roles of the British Columbia fire services.

Public fire safety education programs provide a way for the fire service to reach communities and bring positive change. Effective public fire safety education programs are the result of knowing what to teach and how to teach it. These programs are designed to change attitudes and behaviours to create safer communities for all.

Program Purpose

Get to Know Fire is a comprehensive fire safety education program created for use by anyone in the fire service. There are lessons for everyone from young children to older adults, which provide accurate and consistent messaging on a variety of topics.

This program is meant to be a guide that assists the fire service with addressing the fire safety education needs of their communities. *Get to Know Fire* can be used to enhance existing public education programs or as the foundation for creating a new program in your community.

Get to Know Fire does not replace the National Fire Protection Association's Learn Not to Burn® program or any fire safety program intended to be taught by teachers in a school-based setting. Rather, *Get to Know Fire* is designed to assist fire service members in delivering effective presentations to any age group. *Get to Know Fire* focusses on fire prevention in the home. Information about wildfire preparedness, prevention and mitigation can be found through FireSmart BC.

Get Started

Starting a public education program within the fire department can happen in a number of ways. Simply recognizing public education as an important service to your community, and an integral part of fire prevention, is the first step.

You can start by identifying local fire problems and audiences at higher risk of fire. This can help determine where your efforts and resources are best placed. Use local fire loss records and hospital burn injury statistics as a guide. Annual reports are available from the Office of the Fire Commissioner's website. Local statistics are available through the fire department's incident reporting system.

Proven fire prevention strategies may also help focus your efforts. For example, research indicates that installation and maintenance of working smoke alarms and planning and practicing home fire escape drills save lives. A public education program targeting smoke alarms and home escape planning is an excellent place for your department to start.

Once you have established a focus for public education in your department, refer to *Get to Know Fire* for lesson plans that are appropriate for each audience you address. Taking the lessons into your community may simply mean calling a local club, group, school, housing complex or community centre and offering to do a fire safety presentation. Effective public education programs are built over time, so start small to build your department's success.

No specific training is required to effectively use *Get to Know Fire*. It is simple, yet comprehensive, and contains everything you need to deliver interesting and interactive fire safety presentations.

Content

It is recommended that all fire department members become familiar with the format and content of *Get to Know Fire*. The lesson plan documents are intended for the instructor's use. They provide simple, easy-to-use instructions to deliver presentations to the following audiences:

Lesson	Age Group
Schools: Preschool-Kindergarten	Ages 4-6
Schools: Grades 1-2	Ages 6-8
Schools: Grades 3-5	Ages 8-11
Schools: Grades 6-7	Ages 11-13
Fire and Life Safety House	All ages
Teens: Cooking Fire Safety	Ages 13-18
Teens: Career in the Fire Service	Ages 13-18
Adults	Ages 18+
Portable Fire Extinguishers	Ages 18+

All lessons follow the same organizational format and are divided into four sections:

1. Lesson Overview
 - Lesson Objectives
 - Resource List
 - Teaching Tips
2. Agenda
3. Lesson Plan
4. Materials and Handouts

Resources contained within the lessons are appropriate for the target audience. These resources include:

Resources	
Instructor Materials	Questions, activities, pictures or videos to be read or displayed by the instructor during the lesson
In-lesson Handouts	Quizzes, worksheets and activities that should be printed and distributed to everyone during the lesson
Take-home Handouts	Worksheets and fact sheets that everyone in the lesson takes home
Fire Department Materials	Props like turn-out gear, smoke alarms and portable fire extinguishers that are used by the instructor during the lesson
Optional Materials	Prizes like stamps and stickers distributed by the instructor during or after the lesson

The lesson plans can be used in their entirety or modified to meet local needs. They are intended as a guide to effectively deliver fire safety presentations. Departments are encouraged to personalize lesson plans by highlighting local statistics, trends, issues and circumstances, as appropriate, as well as using their own resources, such as videos, posters and brochures.

Prior to delivering a lesson, read the **Get Ready to Teach** section thoroughly, as it contains key information to help instructors prepare the lesson and connect with an audience. For further information, contact the Office of the Fire Commissioner at OFC@gov.bc.ca.

Get Ready to Teach

Preparation

It is important to be well-prepared before the start of your lesson. Spend time familiarizing yourself with all aspects of the *Get to Know Fire* program. When you are ready to bring your fire department's public education program into the community, contact the lesson organizer, such as a classroom teacher, to coordinate necessary arrangements. A crucial first step is establishing the lesson's location, time and date and the number of learners that will be present, as well as which lesson plan should be taught.

After coordinating the lesson logistics, refer to the following pages for helpful tips on getting ready to deliver a *Get to Know Fire* lesson to any audience.

Tips for Lesson Delivery



Before your lesson, remember:

- Print or download an electronic copy of the lesson plan and review the entire document, including the objectives, teaching tips and all key messages.
- Review all resources being used, displayed and distributed. This includes instructor's materials, in-lesson handouts and take-home handouts.
- Make enough copies of the in-lesson and take-home handouts, including the **Our Home is Fire Safe** package. Ensure you have your own physical or electronic copies of the instructor's materials.
- Look up local and provincial fire statistics to understand risks that may be unique and important to the community you are presenting in. Annual reports are available from the Office of the Fire Commissioner's website. Local statistics are available through the fire department's incident reporting system.
- Complete the **Audience Considerations Checklist** and contact the classroom teacher or lesson organizer for more information on the audience and setting.
- Prepare any supplies, prizes and props you require. Consider assembling a kit to store all the resources you need while teaching *Get to Know Fire*.
- Arrive early to the lesson location.
- Establish a seating area for the group. This could include using tarps, mats or blankets, or arranging chairs and desks so they are facing the presentation area.
- Check that equipment and technology are working properly. If showing videos or displaying any of the instructor's materials, cue them before the lesson.

Tips for Lesson Delivery

- Set up any props, pictures or posters. If fire department materials such as turn-out gear, fire extinguishers or smoke alarms are being used, lay them out and ensure they are clean and free of contaminants.
- Let the classroom teacher or lesson organizer know when you are ready to begin.
- Always be respectful to the group and the topics being presented. Never forget that you are there to serve the community.
- Do not forget that although fire safety is serious, learning it can be fun!

Location, Accessibility and Timing

For school-age and teens lessons, coordinate all logistics with the classroom teacher. Lessons outside of the classroom or school-hours should be easily accessed by your audience and delivered at a time considerate of their lifestyle and commitments. Choose a venue with few (or no) stairs or with elevators to ensure full accessibility to participants. Provide clear directions to the venue and confirm adequate parking is available. For older adults, planning your session in a meeting area at the local seniors' centre or seniors' housing complex provides a familiar and accessible setting. If possible, provide refreshments, snacks or fire department promotional materials to make the event a social outing, as well as an educational opportunity.

Setup, Cleaning and Safety

To enhance credibility, dress in uniform and always model fire safe behaviours. Keep your hands and uniform clean and sanitize all props before and after the lesson. Do not let younger learners play with props, such as fire extinguishers and smoke alarms, and do not let them wear turn-out gear. Follow all local and provincial public health guidelines in place.

Minimize distractions by asking the audience to remove all materials from their desktops and ensure they have a clear view of the presentation area. Follow all classroom or location rules, including cleaning requirements. Do not leave a mess. If the layout or design of the lesson location is altered to accommodate your lesson, make sure to place things back in their original position afterwards.

As the presenter, you are responsible for arranging tables and seating to create a positive learning environment. No matter the group size, everyone in the audience should be able to see the instructor, and ideally, each other. Effective room set-ups include arranging the class in a square U-shape, a semi-circle, around a conference table or in angled rows that point toward the presentation area.

Resources

Every lesson plan in *Get to Know Fire* includes a list of resources to be used during the lesson, as well as printouts to be taken home by the class. It is your responsibility to ensure you have enough physical copies of any printed resources and have digital copies of any resources you plan to display.

Resources	Requirements
Instructor Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only one print or digital copy, as they belong to the fire safety instructor Can be printed and/or displayed on a screen
In-lesson Handouts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Print copies for each attendee or group
Take-home Handouts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Print copies for each attendee
Fire Department Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommended but not required Purchased and provided by yourself or your fire department
Optional Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommended but not required Provided by yourself or your fire department

All materials and handouts can be printed in colour or in black and white, or displayed on a screen.

The **Our Home is Fire Safe** take-home package contains valuable lessons on keeping homes fire safe. This package is to be distributed to everyone in each lesson plan.

The **Evaluation Form** is an optional tool to obtain feedback on the quality, delivery and relevance of the lesson you have delivered. Each department can decide if they want to collect this feedback. If using, provide a copy of the Evaluation Form to the classroom teacher or to each adult learner after the lesson and ask that they return it to your fire department within a few days or hand it back before they leave.

Additional Teaching Resources	Links
<p>FireSmart BC</p> <p><i>Get to Know Fire</i> focuses on fire prevention in the home. Information about wildfire preparedness, prevention and mitigation can be found through FireSmart BC.</p>	<p>firesmartbc.ca</p>
<p>National Fire Protection Association Desk Reference</p> <p>The National Fire Protection Association's (NFPA) 2020 Educational Messages Advisory Committee Desk Reference includes more fire safety key messages that can be used for public education.</p> <p>Sign up online to download a free copy.</p>	<p>nfpa.org/Public-Education/Teaching-tools/Educational-messaging</p>
<p>National Fire Protection Association Teaching Resources</p> <p>The NFPA also has various teaching resources available in multiple languages, including tip sheets, lesson plans and messaging with illustrations representing various cultures. All files are in PDF format.</p>	<p>nfpa.org/Public-Education/Teaching-tools/Safety-tip-sheets/Easy-to-read-handouts-in-other-languages</p>

Get to Know Your Audience

It is important that you are familiar with your audience prior to the lesson, so that instructional time is used effectively. Ages, abilities, interests and life situations vary considerably within groups. Always emphasize the importance of the information you are delivering and the positive aspects of learning new behaviours or challenging pre-set opinions about fire safety.

Living Scenarios

Consider the different living scenarios that could be in your group or community, including but not limited to people living independently; with other people such as family, roommates or in a multi-generational home; with a caregiver or someone they are providing care to; and in a group facility like a seniors' housing complex.

Abilities

Contact the lesson organizer to understand how to tailor the lesson to any learners with disabilities or mobility, visual or auditory concerns. If someone has experienced a fire or has been badly burned, having this information can assist you in your lesson preparation and delivery.

Behaviours

For school-age and teens lessons, contact the classroom teacher to discuss classroom behaviour guidelines and expectations, and any significant issues concerning the class or individual students that may impact your lesson. The classroom teacher should remain present during the entire lesson to assist with class management and to become familiar with the fire safety behaviours being taught.

Ages and Experience

Teen and adult audiences can vary considerably in age ranges. It is important to tailor your lesson to account for what your audience already knows, including their life experience and learning styles.

The lessons are intended to be interactive and engage the group in active participation. Ask the audience for their opinions and ideas and involve as many participants as possible in discussions and activities. If you are presenting to a multi-generational audience (both adults and children in attendance), try to involve all age groups in any activities. Ask younger group members to help distribute handouts or have them complete a worksheet while you explain more advanced subjects to older audiences.

Key Messages

At the end of each lesson topic section there are key messages instructors are directed to repeat to the audience. These key messages can be tailored to consider audience needs based on:

- Age appropriateness
- Cultural sensitivity
- Potential language barriers and the need to simplify any terms
- Instructor experience
- Community relevance
- Readiness to perform a specific behaviour (e.g., stop, drop and roll)
- Safety behaviour relevant to the topics within the lesson

Instructors are encouraged to remember the **ABCs** when tailoring any key messages. Be:

A Accurate

B Behaviour-focused

C Consistent

Audience Identities

There is great value in developing a culturally responsive approach to fire prevention to ensure the lesson plan reflects people living in British Columbia. A Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+) lens should be considered to ensure lessons are inclusive of all audiences, which could include Indigenous Peoples and racialized communities, immigrants, people with disabilities and 2SLGBTQI+ communities.

Complete the following checklist to help you consider audience demographics, cultural differences and barriers. This checklist is intended to help you prepare to present the *Get to Know Fire* lesson plans in a way that is culturally responsive and provides the opportunity for reflection and self-assessment.

Audience Considerations Checklist

- Gain as much knowledge about your audience in advance as possible. Aspects of audience identity to consider include age, gender, ethnicity, language, living location, housing type, socio-economic status, religion, cognitive and physical ability, and if they are new to the region or Canada. Determine if the audience will consist of one grade/age or integrated grades/ages in one room.
- Look up the address of the lesson location to use local names of roads or landmarks when discussing fire response. Audiences want to recognize their community and sometimes local names don't appear online. When possible, include cultural figures, community contributors, historical events and local fire statistics that are relevant to the community you are presenting in.
- Determine whether attendance at the presentation is voluntary or mandatory. Be aware that the audience may already have biases or expectations for your presentation. When encountering bias, cultivate an awareness of the bias and work to increase empathy, create interactions between others in the class and promote the inclusive learning materials and activities.
- Avoid using binary-gendered terms and biases/stereotypes. For example, say "firefighter" not "fireman."
- If there is a predominant audience language, consider looking up ways to say "welcome" and "thank you."
- When visiting a First Nation community, reach out in advance to specifically discuss wording for a land acknowledgement. You can also review a presentation from the Government of BC's Public Service Department on [Meaningful Territory Acknowledgements](#). A sample acknowledgement includes:
 - "As a visitor on this land, I would like to begin by acknowledging that we are gathered on the traditional and unceded territory of the [name of First Nation(s)]. As a settler from [describe your background], I am committed to working towards reconciliation."
- It is important to properly pronounce host and First Nation names. Practice saying names before your lesson. If you are not sure how to pronounce a Nation's name, there are a number of ways to learn, including:
 - Review the Government of BC's guide on [Pronunciation of Indigenous Communities and Organizations in BC](#)
 - Respectfully ask someone from the Nation or from a local organization such as a Friendship Center
 - Check the Nation's website, as they may have a phonetic pronunciation on their "About" page
- Create a culturally inclusive environment. Do not assume that all audiences share common cultural traits, traditions, values or practices. Avoid negative stereotypes or associating unsafe fire behaviours with any specific cultural group. Include opportunities for the audience to identify fire hazards or solutions that may be unique from their cultural perspective or experience.
- Think about how to make the environment more welcoming based on the audience's way of life or physical abilities. For example, they may prefer sitting in a circle instead of classroom style.
- Determine if any members of the audience may be deaf, hard of hearing or have hearing loss, or are blind or have loss of sight. Be sure to speak clearly, using your regular voice volume and lip movement. If the audience includes members who are deaf/hard of hearing, make sure to involve an interpreter throughout lesson delivery. Brief the interpreter on the fire safety topics and behaviours being covered prior to starting your lesson.
- Be creative in finding ways to communicate with the audience if they have limited English speaking proficiency. If working with an interpreter, brief them on the fire safety topics and behaviours being covered prior to starting your lesson.
- Assess if there is any opportunity to involve a junior firefighter in teaching the lesson. Teen audiences can be inspired to see themselves in the role of fire service personnel.

Videos

Each *Get to Know Fire* lesson plan includes videos relevant to topics within the lesson. The videos are optional resources and can be used as a supplement to reinforce key messages. Video links are embedded within the lesson plans and should be cued before the start of the lesson. For lessons where internet connection is unavailable or unreliable, downloadable copies of the videos are available from Crown Publications. The below table lists the videos that can be used within *Get to Know Fire*.

If your fire department has its own educational video resources, it is also encouraged to present them where appropriate within the *Get to Know Fire* lesson plans.

Video	Link
Safe Cooking Brampton Fire and Emergency Services	youtube.com/watch?v=ht2edh4Bd9U
Plan Your Escape: High-Rise Apartment Fire Fire Safety Research Institute	youtube.com/watch?v=iOCx5ZQeLLU
DFES House Fire VR Experience Government of Western Australia Department of Fire and Emergency Services	youtube.com/watch?v=mcmZ7zEAhbQ
When & how to call 911. Teaching children how to call 911 using various phones. The Hospital for Sick Children / AboutKidsHealth	youtube.com/watch?v=JdKG_L5YuB8
How To Use a Fire Extinguisher Kelowna Fire Department	youtube.com/watch?v=wxPr2oVSS0c
Every Second Counts in a Home Fire—Practice Your Escape Plan National Fire Protection Association	youtube.com/watch?v=Vc-AkbpdSYk
The Gear Firefighters Wear National Fire Protection Association	youtube.com/watch?v=GfjZRNfEcH4
I Spy Cooking Safety National Fire Protection Association	youtube.com/watch?v=2UBYautmHgk
I Spy Fire Safety National Fire Protection Association	youtube.com/watch?v=Uk6WCMg_70g
I Spy Sounds of Fire Safety National Fire Protection Association	youtube.com/watch?v=v0hZNCGJ0VA&t=1s
The Science of Fire National Fire Protection Association	youtube.com/watch?v=ZaitJzegFrc
Steps to Safety National Fire Protection Association	youtube.com/watch?v=KyBTw9uW4VU
Firefighter (Episode 64) WorkBC's Career Trek	youtube.com/watch?v=LgMvz1gp-QI