



Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services Office of the Fire Marshal	Ministère de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels Bureau du commissaire des incendies	 Ontario
Place Nouveau Building 7th Floor 5775 Yonge Street North York ON M2M 4J1 Telephone 416-325-3100 Facsimile: 416-325-3162	Édifice Place Nouveau 7 ^e étage 5775 rue Yonge North York ON M2M 4J1 Téléphone: 416-325-3100 Télécopieur: 416-325-3162	

For Immediate Release

Recent fire in Barrie prompts OFM to issue fire safety warning

TORONTO - July 12, 2007 – Ontarians should plug portable air conditioners directly into electrical outlets or, if that is not possible, use heavy-duty appliance extension cords warns Deputy Fire Marshal Doug Crawford. This fire safety warning comes after the Office of the Fire Marshal (OFM) confirmed a near million-dollar fire in Barrie began with the improper use of an extension cord.

When OFM investigators arrived at the Dunlop Street West building, which contained nine apartments and three retail outlets, they noted a refrigerator and a portable air conditioner plugged into a 16-gauge extension cord. OFM investigators examined the electrical wire within the melted cord and noted obvious arcing damage.

“If you can, plug portable air conditioners directly into an electrical outlet. If that is not possible, use a ‘listed’ 14 gauge, three-wire grounding type appliance extension cord,” said Crawford. “The type of cord at the fire scene was a light-duty extension cord. These cannot handle the load of air conditioners and other heavy appliances. For example, last summer, a young father and his three-week-old child tragically died in an apartment fire where an extension cord was being used improperly with a portable air conditioner. Fortunately in this latest fire, no one was injured and the fire alarm system was functional.”

As the warm weather continues and people turn to their air conditioners for relief, these fires should serve as reminders, for landlords and tenants in particular, of how important it is to ensure that air conditioners are operating safely and that homes and multi-unit dwellings be equipped with working smoke alarms on every storey and outside sleeping areas.

The fast-moving fire began on Sunday and left a number of Barrie businesses out of operation and several people homeless. The Office of the Fire Marshal, Barrie Fire & Emergency Service and the Barrie Police Service conducted the investigation.

**For more information contact:
Carol Gravelle, Office of the Fire Marshal, 416-325-3138
Bev Gilbert, Office of the Fire Marshal, 416-325-3178**

**Tony Moscioni
A/Senior Electrical Inspector
Electrical Safety Authority
416.991.4145**

