**Emergencies for Boat Access Cottagers**

As a cottager with boat only access, have you ever wondered how you would handle an emergency at your cottage? Mark Schjerning, Chief of Emergency Service, County of Lennox and Addington (ambulance services) and Casey Cuddy, Fire Chief for Addington Highlands & Ward 1 of North Frontenac were contacted to get their advice, which I would like to share with our MPOA members.

Remote access calls are often very challenging, as we can all appreciate. For you to know some options in advance could significantly improve your experience. Here are some options for you to be aware of:

**#1** Transporting someone requiring medical attention to meet the EMS on the hwy or road access side of the lake

If residents are able to meet the emergency responders at a landing or dock, this will significantly reduce the response time and result in them receiving definitive care in hospital much earlier. There are 3 obvious places which all cottagers and boaters should be aware of: (i) Brown's Campground at the top of the lake; (ii) the public boat launch at Tapping’s landing; and (iii) Smarts Marina at the bottom of the lake. The EMS, Fire department and OPP will need a 911 number or a blue 'civic address' number to meet a person with medical needs so here are the 3 addresses that any of these services can be directed to. Keep these handy and visit them in advance to know exactly where they are.

1. Brown's Camp:  61 Addington Road 5, RR# 1 Cloyne
2. Tapping's Landing: 371 North Mazinaw Heights Road, Cloyne
3. Smarts Marina: 1018 Smart Road,  Cloyne   (\*during business hours…Smarts Marina closes their gate at the close of business)

Please note that the public dock at Tapping’s landing does not have a 911 number in our MPOA directory. Please open it up to map D and add it yourself now.

Another excellent idea for you to consider to facilitate a timely response for property owners with water access only is to make arrangements with a “buddy” (nearby neighbour who is located on an accessible road)…preferably at the closest point to your cottage with good access for emergency vehicles. The accessible road should have a solid smooth surface with enough space to handle larger emergency response vehicles. Laneways should be at least 12 feet wide with trees and limbs trimmed up at least 12 feet high. There also needs to be enough area to turn vehicles around. Another thing to consider is that the “buddy’s” property should not have steep frontage and should provide easy access to the lakeshore. The water access persons should know the 911 address of their “buddy” (e.g.. 12345 Hwy 41). If this is a medical call and it is safe to move the person requiring medical attention, transport them to the “buddy’s” location. . Establishing a “buddy” system will only improve emergency service providers’ response time thus getting help to the persons needing it much quicker.

**#2** Meeting the EMS on the hwy or road access side of the lake & transport them to the emergency on the other side of the lake

Sometimes, the resident will not have a choice (e.g. it may be impossible to move someone requiring medical attention who is heavier than the person assisting them in to a boat and to the closest landing; the person requiring medical attention is not movable; there is a fire at the property). In such cases, another option which can be organized to speed up time, is for the person calling in the emergency to arrange to have the emergency responders meet at a location suggested by the caller (i.e. at one of the 3 locations noted above, or at your “buddy’s” place) and transport them to the emergency with a safe boat. \* Note: A safe boat is one that meets the Canada Shipping Act – “Small Vessel Regulations” and has enough life jackets for the persons to be transported. If a response is needed during non-daylight hours then the boat must have proper navigational lights and an operator who knows their way around the lake (body of water) in the dark. Please note that the emergency responders therefore the municipalities will assume no responsibility for damage to privately owned boats. \* Caveat: if the boat is safe, the fire department will go in a private boat until they get their own boat there. This is subject to change, as per the elected officials/township rules. The EMS however will only go in a fire boat to access a patient".

**#3** EMS come to the emergency on the other side of the lake

If you are unable to employ options 1 or 2 above, the EMS service, when faced with a remote/wilderness response will employ a coordinated response often involving fire services, OPP, MNR, and DND Search & Rescue. The good news, is the Fire Department recently acquired a boat, thanks to the councilors of North Frontenac and Addington Highlands.  The boat will be stored at the Cloyne fire station.  It will be used to service all surrounding lakes, as required. Casey noted within the Kaladar/Barrie Fire Department’s response area, there are over 1,548 square kilometers, and 40+ lakes with water access properties! Of course, transporting the boat and launching it does take time, as I am sure everyone can appreciate.

Please note: It is the policy of the Fire Department that they do not respond across ice (frozen bodies of water).

**Fire Emergencies for Property Owners**

As for a fire emergency at a remote cottage, Casey Cuddy, Fire Chief for Addington Highlands has provided some advice on how to prepare and potentially avoid a fire in the first place:

‘First let me say groom your lot for wild fire protection. The basic is trim trees back from cottage, keep dead leaves, pine needles and grass cleaned up around and under buildings.   Keep a fire extinguisher handy and know when & how to use it. Make sure they have a working smoke alarm on every level of the cottage and outside all sleeping areas.  This includes Bunkies or any area used for sleeping.  In the spring (first time up to cottage) install new batteries.  Every time they return to the cottage test the smoke alarms to ensure they are still working. Draw a fire escape plan and practice it, especially with children as a number of them will not wakeup to a smoke alarm.   Have a meeting place.   Life is always more important than a cottage.  Call the fire department from outside the cottage.

When having a fire in an outdoor pit, always check with your local fire department information line at 613-336-1851 or the Township of Addington Highlands & Township of North Frontenac website to ensure there are no fire bans in place. Note that you should create your fire pit far away from trees and where you know there aren’t underlying roots that can catch fire. Did you know that a fire in your outdoor pit could potentially travel underground and along the roots, catching fire to a nearby tree? Having your fire pit on a natural rock bed or in a wood burning container (which you can purchase at a hardware store) is most ideal. Keep your fire under control at all times. It is advisable not to have fires on windy days however if you decide to do this, keep it small and do not put leaves and other light materials on that can get taken away with the wind.

Never let off fireworks unless you are in an area with lots of open space. Always have a bucket ready in case of an emergency before you start your display. On occasion, we have been given reports of cottagers letting off fireworks near their cabin and close to the woods. This is not an acceptable practice and nearby cottagers have raised concerns. Always be thoughtful of safety, fire prevention and your neighbours.