

# COMMUNIQUÉ

du commissaire des incendies

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## APPLIANCES FUELLED BY ETHANOL

On August 13, 2016, a fire in a seasonal dwelling in Kawartha Lakes caused one fatality and two persons to sustain serious injuries. As a result of its investigation, the Office of the Fire Marshal and Emergency Management (OFMEM) was able to attribute the incident to the process used to refuel a table lamp fuelled by ethanol, identical to the one pictured to the left.



One of the occupants in the dwelling was in the process of refuelling the table lamp while the lamp was still lit with an open flame. Tragically the vapour from the refuelling container ignited, causing a flame jet to propel across the table, striking three persons, and, as a result, causing serious thermal injuries. One of the three succumbed to her injuries.

This fire is the third incident involving an appliance fuelled by ethanol that the OFMEM has investigated. The first incident occurred in June 2012, and caused one person to sustain serious injuries. The second occurred in August 2014, and also caused one person to sustain serious injuries. Although there were different models or types of appliances in the three incidents (a table lamp in two; a portable fireplace in one), the common denominators were the presence of ethanol and its handling during the refuelling of an appliance.

The OFMEM reminds fire departments that they can play an important role in preventing such tragedies, and encourages them to raise awareness of the potential hazards of appliances fuelled by ethanol and to inform members of their community of precautions and safety measures to take when using such appliances.

A safety sheet entitled “[Portable Fireplace Safety](#)”, produced by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) is attached. Please note that, although this safety sheet focuses on portable fireplaces, the safety tips it contains also apply to other appliances fuelled by ethanol and can be used to promote the safe use of all such appliances.

*Attachment*