

Two Veteran Firefighters Killed in Flashover



February was a bad month for Canadian firefighters. Two veteran firefighters were killed in Winnipeg in a flashover incident during a house fire. Flashover is the most dangerous time during a fire. It occurs when all flammable material in a room ignites simultaneously. Anyone unfortunate enough to be in that room is in grave danger.

Capt. Harold Lessard and Capt. Tom Nichols, who both had served more than three decades with the Winnipeg Fire Service, were killed, while two other firefighters received serious burns. Two other firefighters were less seriously injured.

In another incident days later, several firefighters in Ottawa, ON, were hurt when severe heat forced them to jump from third floor windows. Their injuries ranged from burns to broken bones. A second-floor awning helped break some of their falls or their injuries could have been worse.

While fire behavior can be unpredictable, a method of fighting fires used in Europe is said to dramatically reduce the risk of flashovers. Using short bursts of mist rather than huge blasts of water can cool a fire and help prevent a flashover from occurring. The technique is called 3D.