



# **State Fire Marshal Reminds Illinoisans to Change Clocks and Batteries, Test Smoke Alarms in Advance of Daylight Saving Time**

March 11 2021 9:14 AM



SPRINGFIELD - The Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) reminds Illinoisans to test, check for expired alarms and replace batteries in their smoke alarms as they change the clock this weekend.

“Working smoke alarms are critical to preventing serious injuries and death in the case of a house fire. It only takes a couple of extra minutes to push the test button on smoke alarm or CO alarm to ensure it’s working. That extra minute or two could save your life

one day,” said State Fire Marshall Matt Perez. “In 2020, the pandemic slowed the efforts of our “Be Alarmed” program. Still, we had 185 participating fire departments from 61 counties in Illinois install 1655 10-year sealed smoke alarms in Illinois homes. Thanks to their dedication, there are nearly 600 homes in Illinois protected and nearly 1400 residents educated on smoke alarm maintenance, home fire safety and home fire escape plans. Replacing broken or expired alarms not only helps to create a fire-safe home, but working alarms provide early warning helping prevent loss of life due to fire”

The time change serves as a bi-annual reminder to test all smoke and CO alarms in your home. If you find an alarm that is not working or is expired, replace the alarm immediately with a new 10-year sealed battery alarm. Review your fire-escape plan with your family and hold a drill to practice your plan.

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) reports between 2012-2016, almost three out of every five home fire deaths in the U.S. resulted from fires in homes with no smoke alarms or non-working smoke alarms. The chances of dying in a home fire was reduced by 54% in homes where working smoke alarms are present. In fires in which the smoke alarms were present but did not operate, more than two of every five of the smoke alarms had missing or disconnected batteries. Dead batteries accounted for 25% of smoke alarm failures. In 2020 in Illinois, 80% of pre-existing smoke alarms being replaced in homes that received the new 10-year sealed battery alarms through the “Be Alarmed!” program was found to be non-functional or were expired.

A 2017 Illinois law requires ten-year sealed smoke alarms be installed in all homes built before 1988 or that do not have hardwired smoke detectors by January 1, 2023.

"Be Alarmed!" is a fire safety education and smoke alarm installation program administered cooperatively between the Illinois Fire Safety Alliance (IFSA) and the Office of the Illinois State Fire Marshal (OSFM). “The “Be Alarmed!” program is designed to help residents in Illinois comply with the new law, but it’s really aimed at creating fire-safe communities.

For more information on the “Be Alarmed!” program visit <https://www.ifsa.org/programs/alarms>.