

State Fire Marshal Reminds Residents To Test, Inspect And Change Batteries In Smoke/CO Alarms While Changing Clocks As Daylight Saving Time Begins

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

“It’s simple, working smoke alarms save lives! Replacing broken or expired smoke alarms will provide an early warning and help prevent loss of life due to fire,” said Illinois State Fire Marshal Matt Perez. “Construction materials used in today’s homes are made from more synthetic materials which means they burn hotter and faster, while also producing toxic smoke. This means people typically have less than 3 minutes to escape their homes, which makes the early warning that smoke alarms provide even more vital.”

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 2014-2018, 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 55% 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 2021 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. Thanks to the “Be Alarmed!” program, in 2021, over 1,000 Illinois homes and 2,268 residents are now protected by new smoke alarms and were educated about the importance of having a fire safety plan.

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>.