State Fire Marshal Reminds Residents To Test, Inspect And Replace Broken Or Expired Smoke/CO Alarms While Changing Clocks

March 10 2023 9:43 AM



SPRINGFIELD - The Office of the Illinois State Fire Marshal (OSFM) reminds Illinoisans to test, inspect, and replace broken or expired smoke/CO alarms in their homes with new 10-year sealed battery alarms as they change the clocks this weekend. Also, if you still have functional alarms with removable batteries, now is good time to change those batteries. An Illinois law that took effect on January 1, 2023, now requires ten-year sealed smoke alarms be installed in all homes built before 1988 or that do not have hardwired smoke detectors.

“Synthetic materials used in modern home construction causes homes to burn faster and hotter while producing toxic fumes limiting escape times to 3 minutes or less. This makes it vital for residents to ensure they have working smoke alarms in their homes while maintaining a fire escape plan that takes everyone’s needs into account and practice that plan,” **said Illinois State Fire Marshal James A. Rivera.**

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 were 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 2022 in Illinois, 66% 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 2022, over 1,200 Illinois homes and 2,808 residents are now protected by new smoke alarms and were educated about the importance of having a fire safety plan. Since “Be Alarmed” began in 2018, 250 active fire departments from over 61 counties in the state have installed 16,053 10-year sealed battery alarms and have reached 12,565 people providing them with lifesaving fire safety education.

"Be Alarmed!" is a fire safety education and smoke alarm installation program administered cooperatively between Camp I Am Me 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/prevention-resources/smoke-alarm/