

OSFM Reminds Illinoisans to Test, Inspect, and Replace Broken or Expired Smoke/CO Alarms

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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 while they change the clocks this weekend as Daylight Saving Time begins at 2 AM Sunday, March 10. 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.

“In 2023, 68% of pre-existing smoke alarms in homes that received new 10-year sealed battery smoke alarms from our “Be Alarmed!” Program were non-functional or were expired. With escape times down to 3 minutes or less, that early warning from a smoke alarm is key to saving lives,” 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 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.

Thanks to the “Be Alarmed!” program, in 2023, over 2,000 Illinois homes and 4,600 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, 280 active fire departments from over 61 counties in the state have installed 24,548 10-year sealed battery alarms and have reached 17,165 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 aimed at creating fire-safe communities.

For more information on the “Be Alarmed!” program visit: <https://www.ifsa.org/prevention-resources/smoke-alarm/>