

For Immediate Release
Alaska Department of Public Safety
State Fire Marshal's Office

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**CHANGE YOUR CLOCK, CHECK YOUR SMOKE ALARM, AUTOMATIC
MONTHLY E-MAIL REMINDER AVAILABLE**

Alaska State Fire Marshal David Tyler is reminding Alaskans to check the batteries in their smoke alarms when they change their clock for Daylight Savings Time this Sunday. Tyler also reminds the public of a program that is available free of charge through The Alaska Division of Fire and Life Safety. Alaskans can go to The Alaska Division of Fire and Life Safety's web site at www.akburny.com and click on a "*smoke alarm reminder*" link. On this site they can sign up for a free monthly e-mail reminder to check their smoke alarms.

Many homes have smoke alarms with 9-volt batteries that should be replaced at least twice annually. Daylight Savings Time can serve as a reminder to check smoke alarms and change 9-volt batteries. With the development of long-life lithium battery powered smoke alarms, the batteries have a life span of up to 10 years, so you may not need to replace this type of battery as often. The National Fire Protection Association suggests that 90% of American homes are equipped with smoke alarms but over 50% of them are not in working condition. "The key is to take a few minutes to check, test and clean your smoke alarm to make sure it is functioning properly, and what better time to do this than when you change your clock for Daylight Savings Time", Tyler said.

It is important to remember that manufacturer's guidelines for smoke alarm installation, testing, cleaning, and replacing batteries should be followed. However, general recommendations are as follows:

- Install smoke alarms in your home if you do not currently have them. An alarm located between the sleeping area and the living area offers a minimum amount of protection. For maximum protection, install an alarm in every room, on every level of your home.
- Smoke alarms lose sensitivity over time and should be replaced. The approximate lifespan of an alarm is 10 years.
- At least once a month, press the test button to check your alarm. If the alarm doesn't sound, replace the batteries. If this doesn't solve the problem, replace the unit. Keep in mind that 9-volt batteries should be changed at least twice a year. Start this practice to coincide with Daylight Savings Time.
- Periodically clean smoke alarms using a vacuum attachment. This removes particles that could interfere with the alarm's proper operation.

- When a “chirping” sound is noted, this is a sign that the batteries are weak and should be replaced.

Working smoke alarms are especially important during this time of year, with cooler weather approaching. From October through April, which is typically Alaska’s heating season, fire related deaths increase. Having a properly working smoke alarm can double your chances of surviving a fire by notifying you of the fire more quickly, giving you more time to escape.

Having working smoke alarms is not the total answer in making your home fire safe. Practicing general fire safety behaviors and preparing and practicing emergency exit plans are essential to aid in preventing fires and fire fatalities. “In today’s times of modern technology, many people are also looking towards taking advantage of residential sprinkler systems. These systems are designed to put the fire out before it can become a problem and is a relatively inexpensive way to provide and even greater safety environment for your family”, adds Tyler.