

NEWS RELEASE

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CHANGE YOUR CLOCK, CHANGE YOUR BATTERY

SUFFOLK, VA (October 30, 2018) As Daylight Savings Time comes to an end on November 4th, Suffolk Fire & Rescue urges all citizens to check their smoke and carbon monoxide alarms to ensure their homes are properly prepared for an emergency. Alarms equipped with either removable or sealed-in batteries both need to be tested. Removable batteries should be replaced, and sealed-in batteries should be checked to confirm they are functioning.

Data from the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) states that three of every five home fire deaths occur in homes without working smoke alarms and the vast majority of smoke alarm failures are due to dead or missing batteries. Suffolk Fire & Rescue recommends cleaning all alarms to remove any debris that might impede their function and to test the batteries, changing them as necessary. Taking these precautionary measures, as well as creating and practicing a home escape plan, are some of the important steps our citizens can take to protect their homes and families.

“The end of Daylight Savings Time is the perfect opportunity to check your smoke alarm batteries,” said Fire Marshal Chuck Chapin. “We encourage citizens to use this as a reminder to update your fire safety measures in the home, especially as the cold

months approach and heaters start to turn on. Making sure you have taken the right precautionary measures can save lives. Suffolk Fire & Rescue also encourages citizens to install 10-year smoke alarms, which cannot be easily disabled.”

Fire Marshal Chapin also offers the following additional tips:

- Test alarms at least once a month by using the test button.
- If you have an alarm with a removable battery, be sure to check the batteries every six months, and change the batteries every year. If a battery is starting to lose its power, the unit will usually chirp to warn you. Do NOT disable the unit.
- Vacuum or blow out any dust that might have accumulated in the unit.
- NEVER borrow a battery from an alarm to use somewhere else.
- NEVER paint a smoke or CO alarm.
- Install at least one smoke alarm on every floor of your home, and in, or near each sleeping area.
- Smoke alarms should not be installed near a window because drafts could interfere with their operation.
- A smoke alarm should be on the ceiling or high on a wall. Keep smoke alarms away from the kitchen to reduce false alarms. They should be at least 10 feet from the stove.
- Families should also develop and practice a home fire escape plan.
- Always follow the manufacturer's instructions for testing smoke alarms and replacing the batteries.
- It is best to use interconnected smoke alarms. When one smoke alarm sounds, they all sound.
- There are two kinds of alarms. Ionization smoke alarms are quicker to warn about flaming fires. Photoelectric alarms are quicker to warn about smoldering fires. It is best to use both types of alarms in the home.
- People who are hard-of-hearing or deaf can use special alarms. These alarms have strobe lights and bed shakers.
- Replace all smoke alarms when they are 10 years old.

Wondering how to safely dispose of those replaced smoke alarm batteries? Look no further than your Suffolk Public Library, with convenient recycle containers at all local branches.

For more information on home fire safety, or to request assistance with checking smoke detectors and batteries, please contact the Suffolk Fire & Rescue Department at 757-514-4550, or email fireprevbureau@suffolkva.us.

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