



## **CHANGE YOUR CLOCK - CHANGE YOUR BATTERY**

### **Adopt a Simple Lifesaving Change**

A home fire impacts the life of a family every 85 seconds. It is a fact, that working smoke alarms cut the risk of dying in a home fire nearly in half by providing an early warning and critical extra seconds to escape. Although smoke alarms are present in 96 percent of homes, 19 percent do not work, mostly because of dead or missing batteries. On Sunday, March 8, remember to change your smoke alarm batteries when you set your clocks forward one hour at 2:00 a.m. to mark the beginning of daylight savings time.

The United States Fire Administration documented 3,430 fire deaths in the United States in 2007. Additionally, there were 17,675 people injured as a result of fire. Changing batteries in smoke alarms twice a year is one of the simplest, most effective ways to reduce these tragic deaths and injuries.

The peak time for home fire fatalities is between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. when most people are sleeping. Eighty percent of fire deaths involving children occur in homes without working smoke alarms. Tragically, many people mistakenly believe they will be awakened by the smell of smoke in time to escape. Clinical experiments have found that the sense of smell actually lessens when people are asleep. Therefore, when smoke enters a bedroom, it does not always awaken the individual. In addition, smoke disorients people and dulls their senses, making it less likely that other cues, such as cries for help, will awaken them. This is why working home smoke alarms are so important.

### **Installing Smoke Alarms**

You should have a smoke alarm on every level of your home. Make sure there is an alarm in or near every sleeping area. Mount smoke alarms high on ceilings or walls—remember, smoke rises. Ceiling-mounted alarms should be installed at least four inches away from the nearest wall; wall-mounted alarms should be installed four to 12 inches away from the ceiling. Don't install smoke alarms near windows, outside doors, or ducts where drafts might interfere with their operation.

People with hearing impairments should install smoke alarms with louder alarm signals and or strobe lights to alert them to a fire. Be sure the smoke alarm carries the label of an independent testing laboratory.

### **Fire Safety Measures**

- ✓ Make sure the smoke alarms work by pushing the test button. Test your smoke alarms at least once a month.
- ✓ Clean the smoke alarms by vacuuming them regularly.
- ✓ Check flashlight batteries and place a working flashlight near all beds to help family members signal for help in a fire.
- ✓ Plan and rehearse two escape routes during a fire, and select a meeting place for family members outside the home.
- ✓ Replace smoke alarms every ten years.