

REPLACING SMOKE DETECTORS SAVES LIVES

Every October Alaskans turn their clocks back to Alaskan Standard Time. Every October, we are reminded to change the batteries in our smoke detectors.

What we often forget is to check our smoke detectors each time we change batteries. The average smoke detector lasts for 87,000 hours, or ten years. After that, homeowners are often putting new batteries in a non-working smoke detector. The smoke detector has a test button, which, when activated, will sound the smoke alarm to indicate that the unit is operating properly. The lack of signal, or a weak signal, is the sign that the unit is in need of immediate replacement.

In a study of the use of residential smoke detectors, the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) found that:

- Three out of five home fire deaths resulted from fires in properties without working smoke alarms;
- The risk of dying in reported home structure fires is cut in half in homes with working smoke alarms;
- Smoke alarm failures usually result from missing, disconnected, or dead batteries;
- In one-fifth of all homes with smoke alarms, none were working in a recent consumer product safety study.

Fire safety experts recommend replacing smoke detectors every ten years. The age of the detector is stamped on the back of the unit. Consider replacing these with a combination smoke/carbon monoxide unit. Taking the time to maintain smoke detectors may save your life and your loved ones.

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