State Fire Marshal Reminds Residents to "Change Your Clock, Change Your Battery"

Local News

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As the time change approaches on Sunday, November 1, the State Fire Marshal’s Office wants to remind residents to change the batteries in their smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors. Smoke alarms most often fail because of missing, dead or disconnected batteries so changing the batteries at least once a year is a simple, effective way to protect your family and reduce home fire deaths. In fact, working smoke alarms nearly cut in half the risk of dying in a home fire. Warnings from smoke alarms can provide those critical extra seconds families need to get out of their homes safely.

“The recent rise in fire fatalities in Washington State emphasizes the importance of remembering to change the batteries in your smoke alarms, testing your smoke alarms, planning two ways out and practicing escape routes with the entire family,” says State Fire Marshal Mike Matlick.

In Washington State, 67 percent of fire deaths occur in homes without working smoke alarms and the peak time for home fire fatalities is between 11 p.m. and 7 a.m. when most families are sleeping. Those most at risk include:

Children – Approximately 80 percent of child fire fatalities occur in homes without working smoke alarms. Children under age 5 are at twice the risk of dying in a home fire.

Seniors – Adults over age 75 are three times more likely to die in home fires than the rest of the population; those over 85 are 4.5 times more likely to die in a home fire.

Low-income Households – Many low-income families are unable to afford batteries for their smoke alarms. These same households often rely on poorly installed, maintained or misused portable or area heating equipment – a main cause of fatal home fires.

For more information about fire safety, please visit the State Fire Marshal’s Office website at www.wsp.wa.gov/fire/firemars.htm.