

NEWS RELEASE

**The Ohio
Department of Commerce**

**John R. Kasich, Governor
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OHIO DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

CHANGE YOUR SMOKE DETECTOR BATTERIES WHEN CHANGING YOUR CLOCKS

Interim State Fire Marshal Donald Cooper is reminding Ohioans to make a potentially lifesaving change when they move their clocks forward on **Sunday, March 13: Change the batteries in your smoke detectors!**

In conjunction with the United States Fire Protection Association (USFA) and Ohio's fire departments, the Ohio Department of Commerce's Division of State Fire Marshal encourages Ohioans to make it a habit to change the batteries in their smoke detectors at least twice a year – at the beginning and end of daylight savings time.

"The facts speak clearly – only a *working* smoke detector can save your life," said Marshal Cooper. "Ohioans can greatly reduce tragic fire deaths and injuries by performing the simple task of replacing smoke detector batteries. By taking the time to change the batteries and by testing them monthly, you are doing more to affect the fire safety of your family and home than any other action you could take."

Marshal Cooper said firefighters still find that smoke detectors, which typically retail for less than \$10, are often not present in homes or are not functional. Through March 1, 2011, 28 people have died in 22 fatal residential fires reported to the Division of State Fire Marshal. Smoke detectors were confirmed present in 10 (45%) of those fires and functioning in only 1 (5%) of the incidents.

Smoke detectors, when properly installed and maintained, provide early warning when fire occurs. For the greatest protection, install a smoke detector on every level of your home and inside each sleeping area. Also, develop an escape plan and make sure every family member knows what to do if the fire alarm sounds.

Test smoke detectors at least once each month to ensure that they are working properly. Vacuum the dust from inside the detector at least once every year. Batteries in battery-operated detectors should be changed twice a year or whenever a detector "chirps" to signal low battery power. Never "borrow" a smoke detector's battery for another use. A disabled detector cannot save your life. In addition, smoke detectors should be replaced every 10 years or according to the manufacturer's specifications.

For more information about smoke alarms and fire safety tips, visit **www.com.ohio.gov/fire**.

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