

Fredericktown Community Fire District
139 Columbus Road
Fredericktown, Ohio 43019
(740) 694-9701
<http://www.fredericktownfire.net>



Press Release

CONTACT: Jason Bostic, Public Information Coordinator
(740) 627-1664
Email: jbostic@fredericktownfire.net

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Did You Change Your Battery?

FREDERICKTOWN – Daylight savings time started this past Sunday, March 11. Besides setting your time ahead one hour, did you remember to change the batteries in your smoke detector?

The Fredericktown Community Fire District urges you to adopt a simple, lifesaving habit: change smoke detector batteries when changing clocks ahead to daylight savings time this spring. Today, the cost of an average smoke alarm is \$10 and is a low cost safety measure to help alert you quickly to the presence of smoke and potential fire in your home. The cost of replacing batteries and having working smoke detectors in your home is minimal compared to the cost of losing a loved one. Smoke detectors provide you and your family with precious seconds that can mean the difference between life and death.

Just last Thursday a fire in Toledo, Ohio took the life of an eight-year-old girl in an early morning house fire where no working smoke detectors were present. The same day, just hours apart in New York City the FDNY dealt with the deadliest structure fire since 1990. The fire, which killed nine children and one adult, had smoke detectors, but no batteries installed to make them operational. While unfortunate, the deaths could have been prevented.

The following are a few simple steps that will ensure smoke detectors will be ready when we need them:

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Test Your Detectors

The FCFD recommends testing your smoke detectors at least monthly. Test each detector by pushing the test button and listening for the alarm. If you can't reach, stand under the detector and push the test button with a broom handle.

Replace Batteries

If your smoke detectors are battery-operated, replace their batteries according to the manufacturer's instructions. Do this at least twice a year or when the detector chirps, alerting you that the battery power is low. Make sure no one disables your smoke detectors by borrowing batteries for other uses. Everyone you live with should understand how critical it is to have working smoke detectors.

Keep Detectors Clean

Cobwebs and dust can interfere with a smoke detector's ability to sense smoke. Follow the manufacturer's instructions about periodic cleaning, usually easiest by using a vacuum cleaner attachment. If you are going to be doing work nearby that could send dust in the air, cover the detector with a shield. Also, shield the detector if you are painting around it, and never paint on it. Remove the shield promptly after work is completed.

Smoke detectors are most effective if their early warning is accompanied by a home fire escape plan. Every family should have at least "two ways out" of every room in the house and practice those escape routes with the entire family yearly. The Fredericktown Community Fire District recommends that at least one smoke detector be installed on each level of the home, especially near the sleeping area. For extra protection, place a detector in each bedroom. Smoke detectors do require to be replaced after a period of time; manufacturers and the United States Fire Administration recommend replacing them every ten years.

If you have more questions about smoke detectors, home escape plans, and educational articles, visit the Fredericktown Community Fire District website at www.fredericktownfire.net for specific details. If you do not have access to the Internet, contact the department at 694-9701 for more information on fire prevention and safety.

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