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State fire marshal urges you to test your smoke alarms when turning back your clock

Sunday, November 6 marks the end of daylight saving time and serves as a good reminder for Oregonians to test their smoke alarms. The Oregon Office of State Fire Marshal is urging residents to test their smoke alarms before automatically changing the batteries.

"Smoke alarm technology has advanced and many now come with 10-year batteries and some are tamper-resistant," said State Fire Marshal Jim Walker. "So, I encourage residents to test their alarms before changing the battery."

Oregon law requires ionization-only smoke alarms that are solely battery powered to come equipped with a hush feature and a 10-year battery. Because of this technology, the national slogan "*Change your clock, Change your battery*" may not apply to Oregon residents who have these ionization-only smoke alarms.

Other types of alarms are also being sold with either a 10-year battery or a standard-life battery.

"Ensuring you have working smoke alarms in your home is the single most important step you can take to increase your family's safety from a home fire," adds Walker. "Also, be sure to replace any smoke alarm that is 10 years old or older."

To test your alarm properly we recommend you:

1) Push the test button to be sure the battery is working.
2) When replacing batteries, follow the manufacturer's instructions for the correct battery type to use.
3) Always retest alarms after installing new batteries.
4) Replace any alarm that fails to operate after installing a new battery.
5) Inspect your alarms to determine if they are 10 years old or older, and replace any smoke alarm

10 years old or older. Look for a date on the back of the alarm. If there is no date, your alarm is more than 10 years old and should be replaced.

6) Follow the manufacturer's instructions for regularly cleaning your alarms of dust and cobwebs.

Working smoke alarms provide a critical early warning to a fire, allowing you vital minutes to escape, which increase your chances of survival. Additional safety tips:

- Install smoke alarms on every level of your home, in each bedroom, and outside each sleeping area (hallway).
- Never disconnect or remove batteries from smoke alarms for other uses.
- Use the smoke alarm's hush feature to silence nuisance alarms.
- Make a home fire escape plan and practice it with family members.
- Practice you home fire escape plan at least two times a year at different times of the day/night.
- Children, older adults, and people with disabilities may need assistance to wake up and get out. Ensure that someone will help them.

For more home fire escape planning information visit:
http://www.oregon.gov/osp/SFM/Pages/escapeplan.aspx

For more smoke alarm and fire safety information, contact your local fire department or visit
http://www.oregon.gov/osp/SFM/Pages/CommEd_SA_Program.aspx

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