

October 19, 2009
MEDIA RELEASE

Contact information
Fire Chief Michael B. Mansfield
Phone # 978-475-1281

For Immediate release

As the time change approaches on Sunday November 1, Andover Fire Rescue wants to remind residents to make another change that could save their lives – changing the batteries in their smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors.

Communities nationwide witness tragic home fire deaths each year. Approximately every three (3) hours a home fire death occurs somewhere in the nation and 80 percent of those occur in homes without working smoke alarms. Non-working smoke alarms rob residents of the protective benefits home fire safety devices were designed to provide. The most commonly cited cause of non-working smoke alarms: worn or missing batteries.

Changing smoke alarm batteries at least once a year is one of the simplest, most effective ways to reduce these tragic deaths and injuries. In fact, working smoke alarms nearly cut in half the risk of dying in a home fire. Additionally, it is recommended that you replace your smoke alarms every ten (10) years.

To save lives and prevent needless injuries in Andover, Andover Fire Rescue has joined forces with *Energizer* and the International Association of Fire Chiefs for the 22nd year of the ***Change Your Clock Change Your Battery Campaign***. The program urges all Americans to adopt a simple, lifesaving habit: changing smoke alarm and carbon monoxide detector batteries when changing clocks back to standard time each fall, this year on November 1.

“The peak time for home fire fatalities is between 11p.m. and 7a.m. when most families are sleeping,” says Fire Chief Michael Mansfield. “Smoke alarm maintenance is a simple, effective way to reduce home fire deaths”. “Children and senior citizens are most at risk, and a working smoke alarm can give them the extra seconds they need to get out safely”.

In addition, Fire Chief Michael Mansfield recommends residents use the “extra” hour they save from the time change to test smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors by pushing the test button, planning “two ways out” and practicing escape routes with the entire family. Families should also prepare a fire safety kit that includes working flashlights and fresh batteries.

Tragically fire can kill selectively. Those most at risk include:

- **Children** – About 600 individuals under the age of 20 die each year in home fires. Children under age 5 are at twice the risk of dying in a home fire. 80% of fatal home fire victims who were children were killed in homes without working smoke alarms.
- **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. Many seniors are unable to escape quickly.
- **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 or for a free smoke alarm battery or carbon monoxide detector battery, call Andover Fire Rescue at 978-475-1281