

# DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME ENDS - SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 1ST - CHANGE YOUR CLOCK, CHANGE YOUR SMOKE ALARM BATTERY

For Release

*October 30, 2020*

Daylight Saving Time ends Sunday, November 1st. As you turn your clocks back, the Prince William County Fire and Rescue System would like to remind residents to change the battery in their smoke alarms. When properly installed and maintained, working smoke alarms save lives and protect against injury and loss due to fire. You double your chances of surviving a home fire with working smoke alarms compared to homes without working smoke alarms ([www.pwcgov.org/SmokeAlarms](http://www.pwcgov.org/SmokeAlarms)).

## Facts

- According to a report by the National Fire Protection Association, "Fire Loss in the United States During 2019":
  - There were 339,500 home structure fires resulting in 12,200 injuries, 2,770 deaths, and \$7.8 billion in property loss.
  - A home structure fire occurred every 93 seconds.
  - A home fire death occurred every 3 hours and 10 minutes.
  - A home fire injury occurred every 43 minutes.
- Roughly, three out of five home fire deaths resulted from fires in homes with no smoke alarm (40%) or no working smoke alarms (17%).
- In fires with smoke alarms present, more than two of every five (43%) of the smoke alarms had missing or disconnected batteries.
- Cooking equipment is the leading cause of home fires and home fire injuries, while smoking materials are the leading cause of home fire deaths.

## Safety Tips

Deadly house fires often occur late at night and early morning (11:00 p.m. – 7:00 a.m.) when individuals are sleeping. Therefore, it is imperative that smoke alarms be properly installed and maintained to protect against injury and the loss of life. To keep you and your family safe follow these life-saving smoke alarm tips:

- Place a smoke alarm on every level of your home, including the basement, in every bedroom and outside each sleeping area.
- Test smoke alarms monthly by pushing the test button. If you cannot reach the button easily, use a broom handle.
- When a smoke alarm sounds, **GET OUTSIDE AND STAY OUTSIDE.**

- **CALL 911** once you are safely outside.
- Replace all smoke alarms in your home every 10 years or sooner if they don't respond when testing:
  - For smoke alarms with a non-replaceable battery, replace the entire smoke alarm if it begins chirping.
  - For smoke alarms with regular batteries, replace the batteries once a year when you change your clocks, ***fall back, spring forward***, or before if the battery starts to chirp.
- Smoke alarms should be interconnected, so when one alarm sounds, they all do.
- Keep smoke alarms clean. Vacuum or dust your smoke alarms according to manufacturer's directions to keep them working properly.
- Teach children what the smoke alarm sounds like and what to do in the event it sounds.

Smoke alarms can often sound while cooking or taking a shower that releases large amounts of steam. If a smoke alarm sounds during these types of activities, **DO NOT** remove or disable the battery; creating a minor fix can lead to a deadly mistake. Instead you should:

- Open a window or door and press the "hush" button,
- Wave a towel at the alarm to clear the air, or
- Move the entire alarm several feet away from the location.

### **Smoke Alarms for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing**

There are special designed smoke alarms for the deaf and hard of hearing, i.e. vibrating alarms or visual alarms equipped with flashing strobe lights. It is vital that this audience is aware of the availability of these types of smoke alarm devices as well as the importance of a proper escape plan.

For more information on smoke alarms for the deaf and hard of hearing, contact the Hearing and Loss Association of America at 301-657-2248 or visit <http://www.hearingloss.org/>.

### **Additional Safety Tips**

Chief Tim Keen, of the Prince William County Fire and Rescue System, advises families that, "Smoke alarms are vital as they provide an early warning allowing families time to escape a home fire. Develop and practice, regularly, a home fire escape plan and be sure everyone in your household knows what the smoke alarm sounds like, what to do and where to go in the event there is a fire."

*\*Note: When changing the batteries in your smoke alarm, it's also important to change the batteries in your NOAA All Hazard/Weather Radio. Hazardous weather conditions can develop at any time – Be Prepared! Preparation is your best defense!*

For more information on smoke alarm safety, visit the National Fire Protection Association [www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org) and the U.S. Fire Administration [www.usfa.fema.gov](http://www.usfa.fema.gov).