



Smoke Alarms (Smoke Detectors): You remembered to set your clock ahead but did you remember to change the batteries in your smoke detectors?

One of the most important fire safety devices for the home is the smoke alarm. After becoming available in the early 1970's, home smoke alarm sales grew rapidly and the price fell. Today, smoke alarms can be purchased for under \$10.

Several studies have concluded that when working smoke alarms are present, fire fatalities are cut in half. The smoke alarms currently in place have saved thousands of lives, but several problems exist. First, the 12% of homes without alarms have more than half of the fires; second, it is estimated that a third of the smoke alarms in place are not working, often due to failure to replace a worn out battery; and third, many homes do not have as many smoke alarms as are needed to protect the home's occupants properly.

The primary job of the smoke alarm is to protect you from fires while you are asleep. Smoke alarms should be located between any sleeping persons and the rest of the house and outside bedrooms or sleeping areas.

Smoke alarms only have a useful life of about ten years. At that age they should be replaced, even if they seem to be working. This will assure that the alarm will be working when you need it.

Even though prices of today's smoke alarms are less expensive than you might have paid some years ago, today's alarms are more reliable. It is usually not worth keeping an old alarm rather than buying a replacement. As a reminder, some smoke alarms are hooked to the home's 110v electric system and require some special knowledge to safely replace. It is always best to have a licensed electrician or fire alarm specialist change out these type of smoke alarms.

If you have any questions regarding some alarms, please feel free to contact Lt. Derek George at (386) 322-6720 or send an email to firemarshal@ponce-inlet.org.

