

SAFETY CORNER

Public Safety Newsletter

TOPIC: Help Save Lives In Our Community:
*Remind Your Family, Friends & Neighbors to
Adopt A Simple Lifesaving Change.*



Written By: Steve Nedved – Fire Marshal

Date: October 30, 2009

As the time change approaches on Sunday, November 1, the Mitchell Fire Division 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 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, the International Association of Fire Chiefs recommends replacing your smoke alarms every ten years. To save lives and prevent needless injuries in Mitchell, the Mitchell Fire Division 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. Americans are encouraged again to check the batteries during the spring time change on March 14, 2010.

“The peak time for home fire fatalities is between 11 p.m. and 7 a.m. when most families are sleeping,” says Fire Marshal Steve Nedved. “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 Marshal Steve Nedved 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.

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. Eighty percent 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, call the Mitchell Fire Division at 995-8445 or to receive public safety updates and alerts, register at www.nixle.com.

Fire Marshal
Steve Nedved
Fire Marshal -City of Mitchell

If you would like to learn about certain topics please email cindy@mitchelldps.com and reference Safety Corner.

