



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 27, 2009

CONTACT: Dana Woodson
(757) 393-8641

Residents Reminded to Change Smoke Detector Batteries When They Change Their Clocks!

Portsmouth, VA -- As the time change approaches on Sunday November 1st, the Portsmouth Fire Department reminds residents to make another change that could save their lives - change the batteries in smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors.

To save lives and prevent needless injuries in Portsmouth, the Portsmouth Fire Department has joined forces with the International Association of Fire Chiefs for the ***Change Your Clock, Change Your Battery*** campaign. The program urges all Americans to adopt a simple, lifesaving habit: change smoke alarm and carbon monoxide detector batteries when changing clocks back to standard time each fall which happens this year on November 1. Americans are encouraged to check the batteries again during the spring time change on March 14, 2010.

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 are worn or missing batteries.

Changing smoke alarm batteries at least once a year is one of the simplest, most effective ways to reduce tragic deaths and injuries. In fact, working smoke alarms nearly cut the risk of dying in a home fire in half. Additionally, the International Association of Fire Chiefs recommends replacing your smoke alarms every ten years.

-- more --

"The peak time for home fire fatalities is between 11 p.m. and 7 a.m. when most families are sleeping," said Portsmouth Assistant Fire Marshal David English. "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 English recommends residents use the "extra" hour that 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.

For more information, call the Fire Marshal's Office at 393-8689.

#