

AMERICANS CAN USE THEIR “EXTRA HOUR” ON SUNDAY TO REDUCE THEIR RISK OF DYING IN A HOUSE FIRE BY 50 PERCENT

WASHINGTON D.C. - The Department of Homeland Security’s Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is urging all residents to replace their smoke alarm batteries and check their units on Oct. 26, when clocks are turned back to end Daylight Savings Time. Taking part of the “extra hour” to do so can have lifesaving consequences.

“In many of the house fires where lives are lost, an operating smoke alarm could have made a difference. A smoke alarm reduces the risk of dying in a house fire by 50 percent,” said Michael D. Brown, Under Secretary of Homeland Security for Emergency Preparedness and Response. “We urge people not to think ‘it won’t happen to them’ and to take the easy and inexpensive steps necessary to safeguard themselves and their families.”

Some 2,700 people lost their lives in residential fires in 2002 and another 14,000 were injured.

FEMA offers these additional fire safety tips:

- Install smoke alarms on every level of your home, especially near bedrooms;
- Test all smoke alarms monthly;
- Keep smoke alarms clean by vacuuming over and around them regularly;
- As with any appliance, smoke alarms wear out. Replace the entire unit after 10 years or as recommended by the manufacturer;
- Make sure you know the location of your fire department, police station and hospital and post a list of emergency numbers near all the telephones;
- Organize and practice a family fire drill.

More information can be found at:

<http://www.usfa.fema.gov/public/hfs/alarms.shtm>