



MEDIA RELEASE

HOWARD COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF FIRE AND RESCUE

OFFICE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION



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Contact: Anna Hoffmann
Public Information Officer
410-313-5723

CHANGE YOUR CLOCK, CHANGE YOUR BATTERY

Ellicott City, MD - A home fire is reported every 79 seconds and someone dies in a fire about once every three hours in the United States, according to the National Fire Protection Association. By providing early warning and critical extra seconds to escape, smoke alarms double a person's chance of getting out of a home fire alive -- but only if the devices work. Howard County Fire and Rescue is reminding citizens to change the batteries in their smoke alarms when they change their clocks on Sunday, November 2. This simple task takes just a moment and is the best defense a family has against the devastating effects of a home fire.

Firefighters also offer these other suggestions to try and ensure residents' smoke alarms are functioning properly:

- Make sure smoke alarms work by pushing the test button to check them.
- Vacuum smoke alarms to clean away dust that may delay their operation.
- Ideally, have smoke alarms on every floor, in the halls leading to the bedrooms and inside each bedroom.

First responders from Howard County Fire and Rescue also recommend that citizens plan ahead and practice for unexpected emergencies. People should plan two escape routes from their homes, and select meeting places for their family members outside their house. Then they should practice these routines by having periodic home escape drills.

Low-income households may be particularly at risk when it comes to home fires due to their inability to afford new batteries. Howard County residents in need of fresh batteries for their smoke alarms but unable to purchase them can obtain them free of charge by contacting their local fire station.

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