



News Release

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State Fire Marshal Encourages Action during Fire Prevention Week

Baton Rouge LA, In an effort to better educate communities throughout the U.S. about smoke alarm recommendations, the nonprofit National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) is promoting “Smoke Alarms: A Sound You Can Live With!” as the theme for this year’s Fire Prevention Week campaign, October 3-9, which the Louisiana Fire Marshal is supporting along with our local fire departments. NFPA has been the official sponsor of Fire Prevention Week for 88 years.

“Many homes in Louisiana may not have any smoke alarms, not enough smoke alarms, alarms that are too old, or alarms that are not working,” says Louisiana State Fire Marshal H. “Butch” Browning. “We want residents to understand that working smoke alarms are needed in every home, on every level, outside each sleeping area and inside each bedroom. And, if a smoke alarm is 10 years old or older, it needs to be replaced.” If you use single station stand alone smoke alarms you should consider ones that are operated with a 10 year lithium sealed battery.

According to Fire Marshal Browning, smoke alarms can mean the difference between life and death in a fire. NFPA statistics show that working smoke alarms cut the chance of dying in a fire nearly in half. But they must be working properly to do so. The association’s data shows that many homes have smoke alarms that aren’t working or maintained properly, usually because of missing, disconnected or dead batteries. Roughly two-thirds of all home fire deaths result from fires in homes with no smoke alarms or no working smoke alarms.

Your local Fire Department will be active during Fire Prevention Week to promote “Smoke Alarms: A Sound You Can Live With!” locally, and to help Louisiana residents understand NFPA’s smoke alarm recommendations. Through these educational, family-oriented activities, residents can learn more about the power of smoke alarms, newer options for installing and maintaining them properly, and ultimately, how to better protect their loved ones from fire.

NFPA and The State Fire Marshal agree that interconnected smoke alarms offer the best protection; when one sounds, they all do. This is particularly important in larger or multi-story homes, where the sound from distant smoke alarms may be reduced to the point that it may not be loud enough to provide proper warning, especially for sleeping individuals.

“Most people have a sense of complacency about smoke alarms because they already have one in their homes. Fire Prevention Week provides an excellent opportunity to re-educate people about smoke alarms, new technologies and expanded options for installation and maintenance,” says Judy Comoletti, division manager for NFPA public education. “Ultimately, we want this year’s campaign to serve as a call to action for households nationwide to inspect their homes to ensure that their families have the full smoke alarm protection that’s recommended.”

The State Fire Marshal offers the following tips for making sure smoke alarms are maintained, working properly and save lives:

- Test smoke alarms at least once a month using the test button, and make sure everyone in your home knows their sound.
- If an alarm “chirps,” warning the battery is low, replace the battery right away.
- Replace all smoke alarms, including alarms that use 10-year batteries and hard-wired alarms, when they are 10 years old (or sooner) if they do not respond properly when tested.
- Never remove or disable a smoke alarm.
- Practice a home escape plan with 2 ways out and a meeting place in the front yard.

To find out more about Fire Prevention Week programs and activities in your area contact your local fire department or your State Fire Marshal’s Office at www.lasfm.org. To learn more about “Smoke Alarms: A Sound You Can Live With!,” visit NFPA’s Web site at www.firepreventionweek.org.

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