



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Changing and installing smoke alarms can save lives

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in the United States a person dies or is injured in a home fire every 27 minutes. Alabama has ranked among the top 10 states nationally for fire-related deaths and injuries for the past decade. Those most at risk are children ages 5 and under, and adults ages 65 and older.

The most common causes of residential fires are cooking and heating sources, and the most common cause of fire deaths is smoking. A working smoke alarm reduces the chance of dying in a fire by 50 percent. The following tips are suggested for proper maintenance of a smoke alarm.

- * Install one alarm per level of a home.
- * Place wall-mounted alarms between 4 and 12 inches from the ceiling.
- * Place ceiling-mounted alarms at least 4 inches from the nearest wall.
- * Place smoke alarms within 10 feet of the family sleeping area. If occupants sleep with their bedroom doors closed, the National Fire Protection Association recommends that an additional alarm be placed inside the bedroom.
- * Test smoke alarms monthly.
- * Change the batteries on a yearly basis. A useful tip to follow: when resetting clocks on April 4, change smoke alarm batteries.

Various smoke alarms can be purchased at local hardware and home supply stores.

The CDC recommends using alarms with lithium-powered batteries and hush buttons. The batteries in these alarms are good for the life of the smoke alarm unit, or approximately 10 years. More cost efficient alarms are also available containing batteries that need to be replaced yearly. Smoke alarm units need to be replaced every 10 years.

Have you checked your smoke alarm lately?

For more information on fire safety, please contact the Injury Prevention Division of the Alabama Department of Public Health at 334-206-5300, or visit the Web site at www.adph.org/injuryprevention.

3/19/04