# Letter to the Editor on Alarm Replacement

Dear Editor:

All too often, our department arrives to a fire where there is a fatality.  Many times, these tragedies could have been prevented with working smoke alarms.

The National Fire Protection Association reports that 40 percent of home fire deaths result from fire in homes without smoke alarms, 17 percent due to smoke alarms that do not work mainly due to dead or missing batteries.   In addition, many smoke alarms may not work because they are too old; age-related factors such as dust, insects and airborne contaminants can all impact an alarm’s efficiency.

I urge families to not only replace the batteries in their alarms, but also to think about the age of the alarm itself.  All smoke alarms should be replaced every 10 years.  How long have you lived in your home? Have you ever replaced your smoke alarms?  If so, have they been replaced in the last decade?  If you’re not sure, replace them today.

The International Association of Fire Chiefs recommends that for optimal protection, you include smoke alarms with both photoelectric and ionization technology in your home.  In addition, consider using a model containing a sealed, long-life lithium battery.  This type of alarm offers 10 years of warning and never needs its battery replaced.

While you’re testing your alarms, think about their location.  Studies show you have just three minutes to escape from the time the first smoke alarm sounds.  Make sure your family has enough warning by placing smoke alarms on each floor, in living areas, and inside and outside of sleeping areas.   The sooner an alarm sounds once there is an emergency, the more time you have to respond and escape.

These simple steps can go a long way to help save lives.

Name  
Title  
City