



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Change Your Batteries, Change Your Clocks This Weekend

Harrisburg, PA – Pennsylvania State Fire Commissioner Bruce Trego is reminding Pennsylvanians to change the batteries in their smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors while changing their clocks for this weekend's "spring forward" time change.

"We want people to know just how critical a functional smoke alarm is to their family's safety in the event of a home fire," said Trego. "Smoke alarms save lives, it's that simple. Unfortunately, they are often overlooked or ignored until it's too late. Test your smoke alarms monthly and replace the batteries regularly. **Our state routinely ranks among the nation's highest, in terms of deaths related to house fire**, and they disproportionately affect older-adults."

Trego said discharged or missing batteries are the most common cause of a smoke alarm or carbon monoxide detector malfunction. When functioning, smoke alarms can decrease the risk of dying in a home fire by as much as half. From the moment an alarm sounds, occupants may have as few as two minutes to safely exit the building.

Often called "the silent killer," carbon monoxide is an odorless, colorless, tasteless gas that can incapacitate victims before they are aware of exposure. Sources can include wood-burning fireplaces and stoves, gas fireplaces, appliances, grills, generators, and motor vehicles.

Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning are often mistaken for the flu and include nausea, headaches, dizziness, disorientation and fatigue.

Newer models of smoke alarms marketed as having long-lasting batteries may not need to have their batteries replaced, but thousands of homeowners still use models that use standard batteries that must be replaced regularly. No matter what type of smoke alarms are used in a home, all units should be tested monthly – including devices that are hard-wired to a home's electrical system.

"Just as important, is getting into the habit of discussing safety planning with your entire family," Trego added. "Knowing two ways to escape each room if necessary, having a designated meeting place, and physically practicing the plan can make difference during a house fire."

Homeowners unsure of how to maintain or install smoke and carbon monoxide alarms can call their local fire service for advice. For more information about the fire service in Pennsylvania, visit www.osfc.pa.gov, or follow on Facebook at www.facebook.com/PAOSFC.