



TRAVIS COUNTY FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE



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Don't Wait – Check the Date! Replace Smoke Alarms Every 10 Years

October 9-15 is National Fire Prevention Week, and this year's theme of "Don't Wait – Check the Date! Replace Smoke Alarms Every 10 Years" is a reminder about the vital importance of replacing smoke alarms in homes at least every 10 years. Working smoke alarms cut the risk of dying in reported home fires in half.

"In our busy daily lives, it's easy to forget to replace the battery in our smoke alarms until we hear that annoying chirp. We also have a tendency to lose track of just how old our smoke alarms are. It's important that we remember to change the batteries annually and replace our smoke alarms every 10 years. Fires still represent the fourth largest accidental killer in the United States," said Travis County Fire Marshal Tony Callaway. "To determine the age of smoke alarms, check the date of manufacture on the back of all smoke alarms."

Working smoke alarms save lives. In 2014, home fires killed more than 2,745 people in the United States, according to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), and fire departments in the United States responded to 369,500 home fires. Three out of five home fire deaths result from fires in homes without working smoke alarms.

Travis County Fire officials remind the public that there are steps they can take to increase their safety from home fires:

- Test all smoke alarms monthly. A single chirping noise or a continuous chirp with the test button pressed indicates the alarm is working. (When smoke alarms should operate but do not, it is usually because batteries are missing, disconnected or dead.)
- Have and practice a home fire escape plan with all members of the family to increase fire survival chances.
- Install smoke alarms in every sleeping room, in the common area outside each separate sleeping area and on every level of the home. (Alarms are available for people who are deaf or hard-of-hearing.)

Fire Prevention Week was established to commemorate the Great Chicago Fire of 1871. That fire killed more than 250 people, left 100,000 homeless and destroyed more than 17,400 structures.

For more information, please visit the Travis County Fire Marshal's website at <https://www.traviscountytexas.gov/fire-marshall> or go to www.firepreventionweek.org.

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Submitted by: Travis County Emergency Services PIO Lisa Block, 512-854-7954.