

# *City of Salisbury*

## ***FIRE DEPARTMENT***

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### The Salisbury Fire Department Asks You to Help Save Lives in Your Community: Remind Your Family, Friends and Neighbors to Adopt a Simple Lifesaving Change!

**March 12, 2010** — As the time change approaches on Sunday, March 14th, the City of Salisbury Fire Department wants to remind residents to make another change that could save their lives — changing the batteries in their smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors.

Communities nationwide witness tragic home fire deaths each year. Approximately every 3 hours a home fire death occurs somewhere in the nation and 80 percent of those occur in homes without working smoke alarms. Non-working smoke alarms rob residents of the protective benefits home fire safety devices were designed to provide. The most commonly cited cause of non-working smoke alarms: worn or missing batteries. Changing smoke alarm batteries at least once a year is one of the simplest, most effective ways to reduce these tragic deaths and injuries. In fact, working smoke alarms nearly cut in half the risk of dying in a home fire. Additionally, the International Association of Fire Chiefs recommends replacing your smoke alarms every ten years.

“The peak time for home fire fatalities is between 11 p.m. and 7 a.m. when most families are sleeping,” says Melissa Brown, Public Information Officer. “Smoke alarm maintenance is a simple, effective way to reduce home fire deaths. Children and senior citizens are most at risk, and a working smoke alarm can give them the extra seconds they need to get out safely.”

In addition, Brown recommends residents also test smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors by pushing the test button, planning “two ways out” and practicing escape routes with the entire family.

Tragically, fire can kill selectively. Those most at risk include:

- **Children** — About 600 individuals under the age of 20 die each year in home fires. Children under age 5 are at twice the risk of dying in a home fire. Eighty percent of fatal home fire victims who were children were killed in homes without working smoke alarms.
- **Seniors** — Adults over age 75 are three times more likely to die in home fires than the rest of the population; those over 85 are 4.5 times more likely to die in a home fire. Many seniors are unable to escape quickly.
- **Low-Income Households** — Many low-income families are unable to afford batteries for their smoke alarms. These same households often rely on poorly installed, maintained or misused portable or area heating equipment — a main cause of fatal home fires.

For more information about testing your smoke alarm batteries, or if you or someone you know needs a smoke alarm, please contact the Salisbury Fire Department at 410-548-3120, or [www.salisburyfd.com](http://www.salisburyfd.com).