

media release

SA Metropolitan Fire Service



Government
of South Australia



On Sunday 6th April ... Change your clock! Change your smoke alarm battery!

Daylight saving will now end on the first Sunday in April, giving everyone a week longer to enjoy the extra sunlight at the end of the day. South Australia's fire services also remind all South Australians to change their smoke alarm batteries when they turn back their clocks.

Change your clock, change your smoke alarm battery, supported by Duracell, is an annual fire safety campaign promoting the importance of working smoke alarms. Smoke alarms provide a vital early warning signal in the event of a fire.

In 2007 the fire services recorded just under 11,000 residential fires nationally resulting in 70 deaths, 9 of those in South Australia.

"Most of these deaths could have been prevented if the households had working smoke alarms," said District Officer Allan Foster from the SA Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS). "It's tragic when you think lives could have been saved for as little as \$5, the price of a long-lasting alkaline battery."

Research by the Australasian Fire Authorities Council found that the absence of a smoke alarm in a house fire can increase the possibility of a fatality by 60%.

"People don't realise that when they are asleep they can't smell smoke. That's why smoke alarms are essential to ensure people sleeping in a house wake up and evacuate if a fire breaks out," said District Officer Foster.

South Australia's fire services recommend you:

- Test smoke alarms monthly by pressing the test button with a broom handle.
- Vacuum smoke alarms at least every six months to clean the vents, more often where possible.
- Replace the battery annually with a long-lasting alkaline battery.
- Install a smoke alarm outside the sleeping areas on every level of a house, and install a smoke alarm in bedrooms if people sleep with their doors closed.
- Avoid locating smoke alarms near cooking appliances and bathrooms as the smallest amount of smoke or steam can activate them.

On Sunday 6th April 2008 REMEMBER: Only working smoke alarms save lives.

For further information visit www.changeyourbattery.com.au or contact your local fire authority.

ENDS

Fire Fast Facts:

- One in five Australians will experience a house fire in their lifetime.
- House fires are more common in winter months, when people are using fires, heaters and other electrical equipment.
- The majority of deaths occur between 9pm and 6am, and the elderly (people aged 65 and over) have a disproportionately higher fire death rate compared to the rest of the population.
- Sound sleepers and people who have recently used alcohol or medications may not be awakened by a smoke alarm.
- Young children may sleep through the sound of a smoke alarm, so you must alert them to a fire and help them escape to safety.
- The deaf need special smoke alarms with additional features such as vibrating pads and/or a strobe light.
- In 2007 there were 346 recorded residential fires in South Australia.

For further information contact:

Name: Allan Foster
Title: District Officer Community Education
Phone: 0421 058 805
Email: foster.allan@samfs.sa.gov.au
MFS/SES Media Line 08 8204 3770
CFS Media Line 08 8463 4206