

March 5, 2008

## Change smoke alarm/weather radio batteries Sunday

The change to Daylight Saving Time Sunday, March 9, means it's time to put new batteries in smoke alarms and weather radios.

Sarasota County Emergency Management reminds residents that it's important to replace batteries in these life-saving devices when they adjust clocks for seasonal time changes.

About 70 percent of home fire deaths are in homes without smoke alarms or with smoke alarms that don't work. A properly installed and maintained smoke alarm will warn residents and give them time to escape.

Fire Marshal Jane Ross offers these tips to save lives:

- Install smoke alarms on every level of the home. For extra safety, install smoke alarms inside and outside sleeping areas.
- Keep smoke alarms clean. Dust can interfere with how a smoke alarm works.
- A "chirping" noise may mean the battery needs to be replaced.
- Replace smoke alarms about every 10 years. They wear out so write the purchase date on it.

Weather radios are as important as smoke alarms to save lives. Residents can be alerted to severe weather by a NOAA Weather Alert Radio. Local weather reports, watches and warnings are broadcast to these radios by the National Weather Service. Weather radios advise people of severe weather watches and warnings.

Look for weather radios that have Specific Area Message Encoding (SAME), which allows programming for specific county alerts. Other than a weekly test, the radio will only provide a notification for the counties selected.

For additional information about weather radios, contact Sarasota County Emergency Management at 861-5000. Residents who can't afford a smoke alarm or who want information about smoke alarms should contact Sarasota County Fire Prevention Office at 861-5000.