

## Fire Prevention and Safety in the Home: Smoke Alarms

By Debbie Cook, firefighter

Change your clock, change your batteries! Daylight Savings Time began on March 8<sup>th</sup>. Most of you have completed the task of moving those clocks ahead, but did you remember to change the batteries in your smoke alarm? Mariposa County Fire would like to remind you to not only change the batteries, but to be sure you have tested and cleaned your household smoke alarms to keep them in good working order.

A majority of fire fatalities in the home happen at night when families are asleep and most die from smoke inhalation, not as a result of burns. Simply put, smoke alarms save lives by providing an early warning to you and your family in the event of a home fire. Please review this potential life-saving information.

1. Install at least one smoke alarm on each level of your home including the basement.
2. Install alarms both inside and outside sleeping areas either on the ceiling or below the ceiling on the wall. Always follow manufacturer installation instructions.
3. Check the alarm monthly again following manufacturer's instructions. As a reminder, mark your calendar for the same day each month. This would be a good family project.
4. Keep the smoke alarm free of dust, grease or other material that could cause the alarm to operate abnormally.
5. Become familiar with the sounds of your smoke alarm. If you hear a chirping sound, this might be an indication that the batteries need replacing.

As a reminder, while smoke alarms offer an early warning, you still need an escape plan and you need to practice that plan regularly. Review your family escape plan, be sure everyone understands it and the location of the outside safety meeting place. Another suggestion is to hold a fire drill at night by activating your alarm so everyone is familiar with the sound and how to respond to the alarm. This is especially important for children to practice. Protect yourself and your family.

Please share this month's fire safety and prevention tips with your family and friends. For a link relating to the types of smoke alarms available or for other fire safety and prevention tips, visit [www.mariposacounty.org/fire](http://www.mariposacounty.org/fire),

The following link is being provided for more information about the types of smoke alarms available.

[www.usfa.dhs.gov/citizens/all\\_citizens/home\\_fire\\_prev/alarms](http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/citizens/all_citizens/home_fire_prev/alarms)