

NEWS RELEASE

**The Ohio
Department of Commerce**

**John Kasich, Governor
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OHIO DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

STATE FIRE MARSHAL ISSUES CALL FOR WORKING SMOKE ALARMS TO PROTECT ALL RESIDENTS

Interim State Fire Marshal Donald Cooper is asking all residents of Ohio to install, maintain and test their smoke detectors today. This plea comes in the wake of 10 fire-related fatalities in the first 11 days of 2011 throughout the state.

Ten people have died in seven house fires from January 1st through January 18th, 2011. Investigators confirmed smoke alarms were not present and functioning in any of those fires.

In 2010, 149 people died in fires throughout Ohio compared to 151 in 2009 and 188 in 2008. Despite the declining number of fire-related fatalities, one statistic has remained consistent. Approximately 86% of all fatal fires since 2008 have occurred in homes where no smoke alarms were present and functioning, or where no smoke alarms could be confirmed.

“No single device has the potential to save more lives in homes than smoke alarms, especially when you are sleeping,” said Interim State Fire Marshal Donald Cooper. “There should be a functioning smoke alarm protecting every single person in Ohio – whether in a home, mobile home, apartment or dormitory.”

Marshal Cooper added that, during the winter months, there is greater opportunity for fires in homes because of heating devices, cooking and, in general, the increased time spent indoors. If a fire does occur in your home, research indicates working smoke alarms can double your chances of escaping.

Many fire departments distribute and install smoke alarms upon request. Call your local fire department’s non-emergency number for information about their smoke alarms programs.

Marshal Cooper offers the following tips regarding smoke detectors:

- Install a smoke alarm on each level of your home and inside each bedroom.
- Check your smoke alarms monthly and change the batteries at least twice a year.
- Familiarize children with the sound of your smoke detectors.
- Never remove batteries to put in other appliances, such as games or electronic devices.
- If cooking smoke sets off the alarm, do not disable it. Wave a towel, open a window, or turn on the range fan to clear the smoke.

- Smoke alarms wear out over time. Replace your smoke alarms every 10 years.
- Keep smoke alarms clean. Dust and debris can interfere with their operation. Vacuum over and around your smoke detector regularly.
- Interconnected, hard-wired smoke alarms with battery back-ups should be considered. When one smoke alarm goes off, the others alert you to fire, too.
- Consider using dual sensor smoke alarms that combine ionization and photoelectric technology in one unit. Or, use alarms of each type throughout your home per the manufacturer's instructions for optimal protection.

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