

Peter Malinauskas

Minister for Emergency Services



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Smoke alarms save lives - time to check yours

The State Government has joined South Australia's fire services in urging householders to change their smoke alarm batteries.

Minister for Emergency Services Peter Malinauskas said as South Australians prepare to wind back their clocks this Sunday to mark the end of daylight savings, it's a timely reminder to replace their smoke alarm batteries.

"If homes don't have working smoke alarms fitted, the risk of a significant house fire increases," Mr Malinauskas said.

"Without the early warning of a smoke alarm, not only is your house at far greater risk - you're putting yourself, your family and friends at greater risk of being injured or killed in a house fire."

Metropolitan Fire Service Commander of Community Safety and Resilience, Eero Haatainen, said that smoke alarm batteries should be changed every year so that the smoke alarm has the power it needs to do its job.

"Even hard wired smoke alarms have battery backups, so if your hardwired smoke alarms rely on replaceable backup batteries you need to change them as well," Mr Haatainen said.

"When daylight saving ends, you should change the batteries in your smoke alarms at the same time as you turn your clocks back. Once you have changed the batteries make sure that you use the test button to test the smoke alarm; only working smoke alarms save lives.

"When changing the batteries, it's also the perfect time to vacuum around the outside of the smoke alarm and check their age. You'll find a date stamp on the smoke alarm body.

Regardless of whether the smoke alarms are hard wired or powered by batteries, all smoke alarms need to be replaced every 10 years as they become less reliable after that time."

Country Fire Service State Coordinator, Daniel Austin, said most people aren't aware that when you go to sleep, so does your sense of smell.

"This is why it's so critical to have a working smoke alarm to give you the time you need to escape a house fire. It only takes a few moments to change the batteries and check the age of the smoke alarm to ensure that the first step in your home fire escape plan is taken care of," Mr Austin said.

"A working smoke alarm will alert you to fire but it's also very important to have a rehearsed home fire escape plan so that if a fire does start, everyone in your family knows how to escape quickly and safely.

The MFS and CFS recommend that when you replace old smoke alarms you upgrade from the basic minimum required by law.

Contact your electrician to upgrade your smoke alarms with:

- smoke alarms that comply with Australian Standard 3786
- photo-electric smoke alarms that are connected to the mains power supply
- smoke alarms in all sleeping areas, in passageways leading to sleeping areas and in living areas
- smoke alarms that are all interconnected with one another.

For more information about smoke alarms, visit: www.mfs.sa.gov.au