



# NEWS RELEASE

*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

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## **WORKING SMOKE DETECTORS THE FOCUS OF FIRE PREVENTION WEEK**

Victorville—San Bernardino County Fire Dept. officials urge families this week to ensure each of their household smoke detectors is in good working order and that a supply of extra batteries is always on hand.

The reminder goes with the major theme of this year's National Fire Prevention Week, "Smoke Detectors: A Sound You Can Live With." Each Year the National Fire Protection Association focuses on a critical aspect of saving lives from fires. This year smoke alarms are once again the number one concern.

"We see the benefits when smoke detectors work and the dangers when they don't," says County Fire spokesperson Ryan Beckers. "Whether it's a fire response where a family reports they made it out in time because they heard the alarms go off, or the tragic opposite, each call is a reminder of how important and effective these devices can be."

According to the NFPA, the risk of dying in a fire is twice as high in a home without a working smoke alarm, and most people who perish in fires are not in the room where the fire starts. Since smoke and toxic gases spread silently, family members sleeping may not even wake in time to get out of a burning structure. And while most newer homes have detectors hard-wired into the electrical system, keeping the device's battery back-up fresh is still vital to ensuring a working system.

"When the battery dies, the detector emits a single beep every half-minute or so," Beckers says. "And we hear it all the time, especially in newer homes. Even though the detector may function via the home's electricity, if there's a fire caused by an electrical malfunction, the battery back-up is the only thing keeping your smoke detector working."

Typically, fire prevention specialists suggest changing the batteries in each detector throughout the house at the same time you change your household clocks to and from daylight savings time. Following this schedule keeps your batteries changed every six months, which should ensure they're fully charged in the event they're called upon in an emergency.

For more information on this and other household fire safety information, go to the San Bernardino County Fire Dept. web site at [www.sbcfire.org](http://www.sbcfire.org).

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