

Smoke Detectors Save Lives

by Chief FB Carter

When was the last time you tested the smoke alarms in your home? Was it last week? Last month? A year ago?

If you're like many people, you may not even remember. Smoke alarms have become such a common feature of U.S. households that they're often taken for granted, and aren't tested and maintained as they should.

However, working smoke alarms are a critical fire safety tool that can mean the difference between life and death in a home fire. According to the nonprofit National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), smoke alarms can cut the chance of dying in a home fire in half. Meanwhile, NFPA data shows that home fires killed more than 2,300 people in 2012; many of these deaths could have been prevented with the proper smoke alarm protection.

As a member of the fire service for over 25 years, I've seen the devastating effects of fire first-hand; the burn injuries, the loss of homes and possessions are distressing. What's even worse is witnessing a family's anguish after a loved one has been killed in a fire. It's heartbreaking.

As the official sponsor of Fire Prevention Week, October 5-11, 2014, NFPA is promoting "Working Smoke Alarms Save Lives: Test Yours Every Month!" to better educate the public about the true value of working smoke alarms. In support of these efforts, Mocksville Fire Department will be hosting local campaign activities throughout the week, stop by the station at 335 Sanford Ave. for station tours, fire safety tips and education.

My sincere hope is that all Mocksville residents participate in one or more of our Fire Prevention Week activities, and make sure there are working smoke alarms installed throughout their homes. These simple steps can help make a life-saving difference, and prevent the potentially life-threatening impact of fire.

Here are additional smoke alarm tips to follow:

- Install smoke alarms in every bedroom, outside each separate sleeping area and on every level of the home, including the basement.
- Interconnect all smoke alarms throughout the home. When one sounds, they all sound.
- Test alarms each month by pushing the test button.
- Replace all smoke alarms, including alarms that use 10-year batteries and hard-wired alarms, when they are 10 year old or sooner if they do not respond properly.
- Make sure everyone in the home knows the sound and understands what to do when they hear the smoke alarm.

To learn more about the "Working Smoke Alarms Save Lives: Test Yours Every Month!" campaign, visit NFPA's Web site at www.firepreventionweek.org.

Chief FB Carter
Mocksville Fire Department