

SMOKE DETECTORS HOW OLD ARE YOURS?

What the local Fire Department will tell you is the fact that smoke detectors only have a 10-year life, regardless of how many times you change the battery. Fire Department personnel experience high number of calls from residents requesting assistance because their smoke detectors were beeping.

Upon arrival, they usually discover that it was not smoke or fire but a smoke detector with a dead battery. They were also finding a smoke detector that was 30 years old and expired. Interestingly,

- Seventy percent of home fire deaths occur in homes with no smoke detectors or smoke detectors that no longer work.
- The presence of a working smoke detector in a home reduces the risk of dying in a fire by so percent.
- In the middle of the night, a working smoke detector is the only means of alerting the residents to get out of the house before the smoke reaches the bedrooms and overtakes them.

Smoke Detectors are one of the "safety and preparedness" items in our homes that we never think about until they start "chirping" at us. Our normal response is to crawl out of bed (it is usually in the middle of the night that they fail), find a battery, find a ladder, climb the ladder, fumble with the tiny battery door until we can finally pry it open, replace the battery, climb down the ladder, and go back to bed satisfied that we have dealt with the issue.

In reality, you may not have dealt with the issue at all, you may have just quieted the "chirp." Knowing how old your smoke detector is and replacing it before it is 10 years old could actually save your life or the life of someone you love. The manufacture date of your smoke detector is located under the smoke detector cover. Anyone who has lived in a residence that is more than nine years old and has not replaced the smoke detectors should install new smoke detectors of the type with a 10-year sealed battery.

While everyone may not have the volunteer resources to coordinate the replacement of smoke alarms in the homes in the communities they manage or the backing of their fire department or Board of Directors, all of us who oversee communities that are nine years old or older should remind our residents annually that their smoke detectors have only a to-year life. Contact your local fire department and see what it can offer to help your community be as safe as possible.

The above information has contains excerpts from an article published in "Community Interests" by Mitzi Mills, CMCA, LSM, PCAM, Executive Director of Sun City Summerlin in Las Vegas. www.tamhoa.com