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## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:  
September 19, 2013

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### “Change your Clock Change Your Battery”

(Salisbury, MD), (11/1/13), 2013. The Salisbury Fire Department urges all Americans to adopt a simple, lifesaving habit: changing smoke alarm batteries when they move their clocks back on Sunday, November 3, 2013.

“Changing a smoke alarm battery twice a year is one of the simplest, most effective ways to reduce these tragic deaths and injuries. In fact, a working smoke alarm cuts the risk of injury or death in a home fire by nearly half,” said Fire Chief Rick Hoppes.

Although smoke alarms are in 96% of American Homes, NFPA statistics suggest that over 24 % do not operate; robbing residents of the protective benefits these critical home fire safety devices were designed to provide. According to the NFPA, almost two-thirds (62%) of home fire deaths resulted from fires without the protection of a working smoke alarm. The most commonly cited cause of non-working smoke alarms are worn or missing batteries. About two thirds of fire deaths occur in homes with no alarms or where smoke alarms are not working due to worn or missing batteries. Smoke alarms have a mechanical life span of 10 years; any smoke alarm over 10 years old should be replaced. Many smoke alarms ten years of age or older have no battery back-up, any smoke alarm without a battery back-up should also be replaced. Smoke alarms that use a centralized battery, integrated into a security system, generally have a battery life expectancy of 3-5 years; check the manufacturer’s recommendations.

A working smoke alarm provides an early warning and critical extra seconds to escape, which is especially important during nighttime fires. Many people mistakenly believe they will be awakened by the smell of smoke. In reality, smoke disorients people and contributes to more fire deaths than actual burns. Besides changing smoke alarm batteries, Fire Chief Hoppes recommends residents test the smoke alarm by pushing the test button, checking their carbon monoxide alarms, changing flashlight batteries, planning “two ways out,” identify a meeting place, and practicing those escape routes with the entire family monthly. Remember, once you’re out – stay out and only dial 9-1-1 from a neighbor’s house or from a cordless or cellular phone.

