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News Release

For Immediate Release

Fire Department Clarifies Smoke Alarm Types

Statistics show that the risk of dying is twice as high in a home without working smoke alarms than in one with working smoke alarms. However, a recent news investigation by NBC News may cause some confusion for homeowners. The investigation highlights the difference between two types of smoke alarms: ionization and photoelectric. The fact is, any working alarm is better than no working alarm, but understanding the difference between the two alarm technologies could further improve chances of surviving a fire.

Smoke alarms utilizing ionization technology generally activate faster in fast-flaming fires. Smoke alarms utilizing photoelectric detection technology generally activate fast in smoldering fires. While a properly installed and maintained alarm of either technology provides a critical baseline of protection, the International Association of Fire Chiefs and the Springfield Fire Department strongly recommend the installation of at least one smoke alarm of each type or the installation of dual-sensor alarms, which utilize both technologies.

The Springfield Fire Department also encourages homeowners to properly install and maintain their smoke alarms. There should be at least one alarm on every level of the house, including outside every sleeping area. Consider using photoelectric alarms closest to cooking areas and bathrooms. Consider hard-wired smoke alarms with battery backup. Check alarm batteries at least once a month and replace all alarms at least every 10 years. And remember to plan and practice home fire drills so every member of the home understands how to get out quickly if the alarm sounds.

For information on how you can receive a free smoke alarm, call the Springfield Fire Department at 864-1500.

Media Only:

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