

S A F E T Y N O T E S

March, 2016



SPRING AHEAD!

Sunday March 13th marks the official time for turning our clocks ahead one hour as we look forward to the arrival of spring sunshine and blossoms. It is also the weekend that Fire Departments use to remind everyone of the importance of checking on the condition of their smoke detectors. For years we relied on a simple slogan: “Change your clock,

Change your battery!” But life with smoke detectors isn’t quite that simple anymore. For one thing, most homes have more than one detector. Washington State requires every rental household to have one smoke detector on each level, outside every sleeping area and inside every bedroom.

Many detectors are now hardwired with simple 9-volt alkaline batteries for back-up in the event there is a power outage. Those back-up batteries should be replaced at least once a year or whenever they begin to chirp.

Since there are now lithium batteries on the market that can last up to ten years, it is important to look for the type of battery that is in each smoke detector unit because it would be a waste of money to replace lithium batteries every year.

Detectors come with two different types of technology: ionization and photoelectric. Ionization has most frequently been installed because the units are typically a few dollars cheaper than photoelectric. However, since ionization detectors have more nuisance alarms from kitchen or bathroom steam, many tenants remove batteries to prevent the unwanted noise. The obvious problem: batteries are not replaced and the detector can’t sound an alert in a real fire situation. Ionization smoke alarms should never be installed within 20 feet of a cooking surface. To solve the problem of missing batteries, some landlords install detectors with built-in





Smoke detectors don't last forever. They need to be replaced every 10 years.

lithium batteries which last up to ten years.

Photoelectric smoke detectors are much better than ionization models at processing the larger smoke particles found in a smoldering type of fire. Over 80% of the people who die in house fires lose their life from smoke inhalation rather than from flames. Photoelectric detectors sound the alarm in a smoldering fire up to 40 minutes faster than an ionization detector.

Check the back label on your detectors to determine whether the household is protected by ionization or photoelectric detectors. When looking at the label, find the exact date of manufacture to see whether it is time to replace the entire detector. Smoke detectors, both hardwired and single-station screw-in models, must be replaced every ten years.

Please use your Daylight Savings time to check on the condition of your tenants' smoke detectors and batteries this March!

Great Community Resources

- Check out the new Spokane C.O.P. Shop website at <http://www.spokanecops.org/crime-free-multi-housing-program> to review "Spring Training" for apartment managers at the Crime Free Multi-Housing workshops scheduled for March 17 and 24.
- Contact Dave Reynolds, Access 4 All Coordinator, at dreynolds@arc-spokane.org to participate in one or more "Accessibility Ambassador" workshops. These 4-hour sessions (noon to 4 PM) are free to anyone who is interested in encouraging accessibility and a spirit of welcome in places, services and events across Spokane County. March 7: "Finding Accessibility" in local shops, restaurants, recreational areas, work sites and more. March 14: "Advocacy for All" explores ways to build relationships and promote "win-win" solutions for disability friendliness in Spokane. March 21: "Making Welcome" is an interactive session for anyone who wants to promote better customer service for all abilities and ages in Spokane.



You can sign up for this monthly newsletter, ask a fire-related question or suggest a specific safety topic by contacting Mike Miller at mmiller@spokanefire.org or by calling 509.625.7000



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