



**HOUSTON FIRE DEPARTMENT
PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE**
News Release

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Change Your Clock, Change Your Battery!
**HFD Teams Up with Apartment Association to Stress
Importance of a Working Smoke Detector**

The Houston Fire Department (HFD) and Houston Apartment Association (HAA) today teamed up to remind citizens to change the batteries in your smoke detector when you reset your clocks for Day Light Savings Time this weekend.

“Checking your smoke alarm and changing the battery are the simplest things you can do to protect your family,” said HFD Deputy Chief Fernando Herrera.

In Houston, nearly 50 percent of residential fire fatalities occur in homes that either did not have a working smoke detector or had no detector at all. In the six month period between January and June of last year, HFD responded to more than 700 residential fires of which 40 percent did not even have a smoke detector. These include homes, duplexes, mobile homes and apartments.

Acting HFD Fire Marshal Richard Galvan urged residents to make sure they have working smoke detectors in their home. “Earlier this year we suffered the misfortune of having four family members die in a fire. The amount of flame was not altogether that intense. It was the smoke that claimed the lives of this beautiful and active family,” Galvan said. “When smoke alarms fail to operate, it is usually because batteries are missing.”

State law requires apartment owners to ensure that apartment units have working smoke detectors in them before they are occupied. Apartment residents are responsible for changing out the batteries in those smoke detectors.

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“Many apartment units in Houston have a detector in them. But we urge apartment owners to speak with your residents to ensure that smoke detectors are in working order,” said former HAA President Beth Van Winkle.

Both the HFD and HAA applaud those apartment complexes that recognize that working smoke detectors not only save lives.

“Early detection of fire through the use of smoke detectors can also prevent property damage and reduce liability,” Galvan said. “So, we encourage apartment owners and apartment residents to work together to ensure that smoke detectors in your apartment unit are working,”

The HFD also reminds citizens that you should have an evacuation plan so that once you are alerted by the smoke detector; you know how to get out.

“It’s important that everyone not only have an escape plan, but that they know it and know where to meet if they should need to get out of their burning home,” said Herrera.

Additional Safety Tips may be found on the HFD website at www.houstonfire.org

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Working Smoke Detectors Save Lives!

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