

CORRECTION: An incorrect phone number was listed for the media contact in a previous version of this release. The correct number is listed below.

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Media contact: Karen Beisler, 941-861-5473, kbeisler@scgov.net

Project contacts: Jane Ross, 941-861-2290; jross@scgov.net

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County reminds residents of time and battery changes on Nov. 1

Sarasota County Emergency Management officials are reminding residents that on Sunday, Nov. 1, daylight saving time will require clocks to be adjusted back one hour. Residents are also encouraged to use the opportunity to replace the batteries in smoke alarms and weather radios.

Approximately 70 percent of home fire deaths result from fires in the home with no smoke alarms, or no working smoke alarms. Smoke alarms can save lives, but only when they are working properly. A properly installed and maintained smoke alarm will give an early warning signal to your household providing the chance to escape. According to Sarasota County Fire Marshal Jane Ross, following these steps could save lives:

- Install smoke alarms on every level of your home. For extra safety install smoke alarms both inside and outside any sleeping areas, especially if you sleep with your bedroom door closed.
- Keep smoke alarms clean. Dust can interfere with how your smoke alarm works. Regularly vacuum over your smoke alarm.
- The “chirping” noise you may hear could mean your battery is low. Replace the battery right away.
- Replace your smoke alarms about every ten years. They do wear out, so write the purchase date with a marker on the back of your smoke alarm to help you remember when to replace it.

Weather radios are equally as important as smoke alarms in saving lives. Tornadoes, hurricanes, severe thunderstorms, and other emergencies can strike in a moment’s notice requiring quick action to protect both people and property. NOAA weather alert radios operate 24 hours a day offering the best protection against hazardous weather events. “One only needs to look at the daily news to know it is important to be prepared to react when severe weather threatens,” said Ed McCrane, Sarasota County Emergency Management chief.

Local weather reports and warnings are broadcast directly to these radio receivers around the clock by the National Weather Service (NWS). Weather Radios advise people of severe weather watches and warnings, giving them extra time to react before

dangerous storms hit the area. When in the path of something like a tornado, minutes and seconds can mean the difference between life and death.

Look for weather radios that have the SAME (Specific Area Message Encoding) feature, which allows the user to customize the radio to activate on alerts specific to their area. Other than a weekly test, the radio will only alert when the programmed counties are concerned. Residents who cannot afford a smoke alarm may be eligible for assistance through the Sarasota County Fire Prevention Office.

For more information, contact Sarasota County Call Center at 941-861-5000 and ask about smoke alarms and NOAA weather radios.

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