



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Every smoke alarm has an expiration date: What's yours?

Melissa Fire Department urges all Melissa residents to know how old their smoke alarms are, and to replace them every 10 years

October 7, 2016 – Does your home have a smoke alarm? According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), the answer is likely yes: NFPA research shows that most American homes have at least one. But do you know how old your smoke alarms are? If you're like most people, you're probably not so sure.

A recent survey conducted by NFPA revealed that only a small percentage of people know how old their smoke alarms are, or how often they need to be replaced. That lack of awareness is a concern for Melissa Fire Department and NFPA, along with fire departments throughout the country, because smoke alarms don't last forever.

"Time and again, I've seen the life-saving impact smoke alarms can have in a home fire, but I've also seen the tragedy that can result when smoke alarms aren't working properly," says Chief Harold Watkins of the Melissa Fire Department. "That's why we're making a concerted effort to educate Melissa residents about the overall importance of smoke alarms, and that they do have a life limit."

NFPA 72, National Fire Alarm Code®, requires smoke alarms be replaced at least every 10 years, but because the public is generally unaware of this requirement, many homes have smoke alarms past their expiration date, putting people at increased risk.

As the official sponsor of Fire Prevention Week for more than 90 years, NFPA is promoting this year's Fire Prevention Week campaign, "*Don't Wait - Check the Date! Replace Smoke Alarms Every 10 Years*," to better educate the public about the critical importance of knowing how old their smoke alarms are and replacing them once they're 10 years old. Fire Prevention Week is October 9-15, 2016.

The Melissa Fire Department will be participating in a number of events throughout the community in support of Fire Prevention Week and this year's campaign. These include their **annual visit to the Melissa Public Library Story Time on Friday, October 14 at 10:30 a.m.** as well as the **debut of the Melissa Fire Clowns lead by Chief "Buckets" Watkins at a special assembly at Harry McKillop Elementary School on Wednesday, October 12 at 8:30 a.m.** "We are very excited about launching this new program which offers a way for us to educate kids about fire safety while at the same time having a lot of fun. I have participated in Fire Clown program at other departments I have been a part of and I am very happy to add this to our department here in Melissa." Stated Chief Watkins."

To find out how old your smoke alarm is and its expiration date, simply look on the back of the alarm where the date of manufacture is marked. The smoke alarm should be replaced 10 years from that date (not the date of purchase). The Melissa Fire Department also says smoke alarms should be tested monthly, and that batteries should be replaced once a year or when they begin to chirp, signaling that they're running low. "One way to remember to do this is to replace your batteries in your smoke alarms when you "fall back" for daylight savings," shared Chief Watkins.

For more information on smoke alarms and this year's Fire Prevention Week campaign, "***Don't Wait: Check the Date! Replace Smoke Alarms Every 10 Years***", visit www.firepreventionweek.org. Also be sure to 'Like' the Melissa Fire Department's Facebook page and follow along for safety tips and updates throughout Fire Prevention Week.

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