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Dept. of Military Affairs: Ready Wisconsin: Fall back safely as daylight saving time ends

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MADISON, Wis. – Fall has fully arrived in Wisconsin and with it comes the end of daylight saving time. As you change the clocks back an hour this weekend, ReadyWisconsin encourages you to use some of your extra time to check the carbon monoxide detectors and smoke alarms in your home, while also making sure your home emergency kit is ready for the upcoming winter.

Daylight saving time ends Sunday, Nov. 7 at 2 a.m.

“Carbon monoxide detectors and smoke alarms provide a critical early warning to a potentially life-threatening situations in your home,” said Wisconsin Emergency Management Acting Administrator Greg Engle. “Spending just a few minutes this weekend to make sure those devices are working properly and have fresh batteries could end up saving the life of you and your loved ones.”

As the winter months approach, carbon monoxide detectors are an especially critical tool to have in your home. According to the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Wisconsin averaged 20 deaths each year between 2015-19 due to carbon monoxide poisoning. In 2020, the state reported 321 emergency department visits and 28 hospitalizations due to carbon monoxide poisoning.

Carbon monoxide detectors can help your family know they need to leave and get to safety if a furnace or other device leaks this deadly gas inside your home. The batteries in them should be changed annually, while the devices should be tested monthly and replaced completely every five years.

Smoke alarms are also a critical early warning tool that can help alert you to a fire in your home. According to the National Fire Protection Association, three out of every five home fire deaths occurred when smoke detectors were either not present or were not working properly. Smoke alarms should be tested monthly and the batteries should be replaced at least once a year. The device itself should be replaced every 10 years.

If you have an emergency kit at home, this weekend is also a great time to check for expired products or items that may have been borrowed for other purposes and need to be replaced. Pay attention in particular to the expiration dates on batteries, first aid supplies and food.

“Having a well-stocked kit is important, in the event you lose power or are unable to leave home during a winter storm,” Engle said.

For tips on emergency preparedness visit http://readywisconsin.wi.gov. You can also follow ReadyWisconsin on Facebook and Twitter.