

Dept. of Military Affairs: Spring Forward safely this weekend as daylight saving time begins

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MADISON – Clocks will jump forward this weekend for daylight saving time and ReadyWisconsin is encouraging you to change more than the time on your clock. “As we’ve been spending more time in our homes this past year, it’s more important than ever to take the opportunity this weekend to replace your batteries and hit the test button on your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors,” said Wisconsin Emergency Management Administrator Darrel L. Williams, Ph.D. “As we approach severe weather season in our state, it’s also a perfect time to double check your emergency supply kits for supplies that need to be replaced.” Daylight saving time begins Sunday, March 14 at 2 a.m. According to the National Fire Protection Association, a fire department in the United States responds to a fire somewhere in the nation every 24 seconds, and a home fire occurs every 93 seconds. With 75 percent of all fire deaths and 73 percent of all injuries caused by home fires, having a working fire alarm can save lives.

Furnaces are critical during Wisconsin winters and are often used nonstop, which can increase the risk of carbon monoxide leaks in the home. According to Wisconsin Department of Health (DHS), carbon monoxide is the most common cause of poisoning. Data from the Wisconsin Environmental Public Health Tracking Program found that carbon monoxide poisoning sends about 500 Wisconsinites to the emergency room each year.

Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning include a dull headache, weakness, dizziness, nausea or vomiting, shortness of breath, confusion, blurred vision and loss of consciousness. At high levels, carbon monoxide can kill within minutes. If you suspect you or someone may be experiencing carbon monoxide poisoning, or your detector sounds an alarm, go outside immediately and call 911. To protect yourself and your family from fires or carbon monoxide, follow these safety tips: • It’s the law in Wisconsin to have smoke detectors on every level in a home or duplex, including the basement. Detectors can be purchased at most hardware stores. Replace your smoke detectors every ten years and carbon monoxide detectors every five years. • Have your furnace or wood-burning stove inspected annually. Hire a professional to make sure it is functionally sound and vents properly outside the home. • Generators should be run at a safe distance (at least 20 feet) from the home. Never run a generator in the home or garage, or right next to windows or doors. • Do not use a gas or electric oven to warm your home. A gas oven may go out, leading to carbon monoxide poisoning. An electric oven was not designed for space heating. • Never use outdoor sources to warm your home including a gasoline or propane heater or a grill (gas or charcoal). Any heating system that burns fuel produces carbon monoxide.

For more information on carbon monoxide poisoning, visit: <https://www.dhs.-wisconsin.gov/air/co.htm> If you have an emergency kit at home, now is 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 to items such as batteries, first aid supplies, and food, which should all be replaced regularly.

For more tips on emergency preparedness, visit: <http://readywisconsin.wi.gov>. You can also follow ReadyWisconsin on Facebook (www.facebook.com/readywisconsin) and Twitter (www.twitter.com/readywisconsin).