

Working Smoke Alarms Key

Working smoke alarms in Kansas households can be lifesavers, according to Ken Selzer, CPA, Kansas Commissioner of Insurance.

“You are at an increased risk if you have a home fire and don’t have working alarms,” Commissioner Selzer said, “especially during the winter. Roughly seven out of 10 home fire deaths happen because the home had no working alarms—or no smoke alarms at all.”

One of the biggest smoke alarm problems that homeowners have, Commissioner Selzer said, is that even if alarms are present in the home, they may not be in working order.

“In fact, households with non-working alarms now outnumber those with no alarms,” Commissioner Selzer said.

The Office of the State Fire Marshal continues to address this issue during 2017 with the “Get Alarmed Kansas” campaign to make sure alarms are working or replaced in Kansas homes. This free smoke alarm program allows local fire departments to install smoke alarms free of charge in owner-occupied homes. To learn more about the program and the eligibility requirements, go to <http://firemarshal.ks.gov/getalarmed>.

Commissioner Selzer and the Fire Marshal’s office offer the following tips for ensuring installed smoke alarm safety:

- Smoke alarms should be replaced every 10 years.
- Make sure you know how old the smoke alarms are in your home. Look at the manufacturer’s date on the back of the alarms.
- Test your smoke alarms once a month, and make sure your family members can recognize the sounds.

“Smoke alarms in your home can also be a factor in lowering your insurance premium,” Commissioner Selzer said, “and you should always check with your agent about that possibility. But the primary reason for having working smoke alarms is always to save your life and the lives of your loved ones if you ever have a house fire.”