

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS CHECKLIST

It's that time of year again... the faithful and somewhat intrusive Daylight Savings is back. Since this event happens on a Sunday, twice a year, and we're already traveling throughout the house resetting things, it's a good idea to check on some other things that need looking into.

All the things on this list might take an hour, or a bit more for a trip to the store for batteries. This hour spent today can save untold inconvenience, and possibly even lives, in the next six months.

○ Change the batteries in your smoke alarms. This is the semi-annual favorite. Whether the batteries need it or not, it is a good thing to change them out. The old batteries can be used in a non-emergency item, like a kid's toy, until they are fully depleted.

○ Change the back-up batteries in your carbon monoxide detectors. Many of these are powered units, but have a battery backup in case of power failure. If you are using a generator as back-up power to run the furnace, the monoxide detector is very important to ensure the generator is not spewing gasses back into the house.

○ Go over your fire and emergency escape plans. Everyone should have the family's escape route and meet-up point known to them. In case of a fire or other situation where you must leave the home, best routes for doing so as well as meeting at the tree in front of the house, or some other easily known location, is vital. It's a good time for a semi-annual refresher.

○ Change the batteries in your emergency flashlights. This is equally important in the case of a power failure. There is no sense having weak batteries in a truly needed item when it is needed. Again, swap the batteries out into something else.

○ Check your First Aid certificates and schedule a refresher course if necessary. The American Red Cross has training near you.

○ Check the expiration date on your fire extinguishers. You do have at least one on each level of the house, right? If not, it is wise to get one or start saving for one. If you have them, check to ensure they're still within their serviceable period. If not, look in the phone book for companies that will inspect and recertify them. This is typically inexpensive, unless the device needs to be refilled.

○ Retrain yourself and your family on how to use the fire extinguisher. Once a fire starts, it spreads quickly. The 30 seconds it takes to read the extinguisher's instructions could make the difference between something you can put out, and an evacuation scenario. Go over how the extinguisher is used with every member of the family able to move it around.

○ Check the contents of your first aid kit and ensure all the items that might have expiration dates are still serviceable. Ensure the inventory is replenished if things have been used. If you find you need additional items, ensure the kit has been thus equipped.

○ Update and check your 72 hour kits. Ensure clothes still fit, food is not expired, documentation packets are up to date, medications are cycled to add new ones, and seasonal needs are met.