

Combine daylight saving time with preparedness

Joseph Parish



Daylight saving time is just around the corner and with it comes foul weather and wintertime dangers. Why not combine changing your clocks with checking your preparedness program? This coming weekend ends this year's daylight-saving time and when you set back your clocks on Sunday, November 1st make sure that you check your smoke detectors as well. While you are at it you might wish to review your family's emergency escape plans and inventory your emergency supplies. When checking your emergency supplies be sure to inspect the expiration dates, and quantities you keep on hand.

Many of my emergency supply equipment runs on rechargeable batteries and if you are like me you will want to ensure that those batteries are in top condition and fully charged nothing is worse than needing a piece of equipment and finding out the batteries have gone dead.

One of the more important items of safety in your home is the smoke detector. Make certain to check completely for its operational status. If you have a smoke alarm installed and it lacks a battery or the one in it is totally dead it is the same as having no detector at all. Sounds dangerous don't it? Be sure to service your detector according to the manufacturer. Additionally, you may wish to follow the tips below as set out by the U.S. Fire Administration:

- The majority of smoke alarms are nine-volt battery powered. You should test these alarms on a monthly basis. They recommend replacing the batteries annually and replacing the entire smoke detector unit every ten years.
- If your smoke alarm is powered by one of the 10-year lithium batteries you should test it monthly. It is recommended that since you cannot replace the lithium battery in your smoke detector that you should replace the complete unit and properly dispose of the old one.
- Smoke alarms which are hardwired into the houses electrical system should be tested monthly and have the unit's backup battery replaced yearly. Replace the entire unit every 10 years.

Next you should do a complete review of your family's emergency escape plan to ensure that everything is current. Inventory your emergency survival supplies and check on the expiration dates. Flag those which will be expiring within the next six months. Try to use your older supplies prior to the expiration date. Below are items which can expire:

- Batteries
- Food
- First Aid Supplies
- Prescription medications
- Water