

Smoke alarm importance to get statewide push

Written by

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COLUMBUS --State fire officials created a new task force to put an added **focus** on the importance of smoke alarms.

The State Fire Marshal's Smoke Alarm Advisory Task Force will make recommendations to the state on how citizens can best protect themselves and their properties through available smoke alarm **technologies**.

Recent statistics show as many as 90 percent of Ohio's fires with fatalities or injuries occur in homes with no smoke alarms, no working smoke alarms or smoke alarms that might not have activated. Additionally, new recommendations by some organizations have suggested the use of one smoke alarm detection **technology** over the other.

The task force's recommendations will be based on the examination of research, recommendations and opinions regarding the use and placement of photoelectric and ionization smoke alarms in residential properties.

"The members of the task force were

specifically selected for their experience in analyzing and evaluating technical information," said State Fire Marshal Larry Flowers. "Their interest in the issue of home, fire and public safety, along with their high integrity and widely accepted credibility, will provide us with a recommendation of smoke alarm **protection** for Ohio's homes."

The task force will be chaired by Robert Rielage, former Ohio State Fire Marshal and current fire chief for the city of Wyoming, near Cincinnati. The members of the task force include: Ohio Representative Joseph Uecker; Dr. Gary Smith, the director of the Center for Injury Research and Policy at Nationwide Children's Hospital; Dr. Lindy Dejarne, a research scientist with Battelle Laboratories; Gregg Costas, a criminal and fire investigator with the Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation; Dennis Kovach, an fire protection engineer with American Electric Power; and Jay Troy, a member of the Society for Fire Protection Engineers.

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Anyone interested in scheduling testimony or providing data, information or research to the task force should call the Division of State Fire Marshal at (614) 752-8818.

ARE YOU COVERED?

» The Chillicothe Fire Department's Project [SAFE](#) (Smoke Alarms for Everyone) provides free smoke alarm inspections for every resident within city limits. If the inspections determine batteries or alarms are needed, they will be provided and installed at no cost. For more information or to schedule an appointment, call (740) 773-2212.

» The Ross County Sheriff's Office's Senior Home Information Program (SHIP) provides free [safety](#) inspections for residents older than 60. The inspections include crime prevention, fire safety, fall prevention and, when needed, installation of free smoke alarms, batteries, carbon monoxide alarms, fire extinguishers, flashlights, nightlights, non-skid mats and reflective house numbers. For more information or to schedule an appointment, call (740) 773-1186.

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