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### **Every smoke alarm has an expiration date: What's yours?**

*The Sycamore Fire Department urges all residents to know how old their smoke alarms are, and to replace them every 10 years*

September 26, 2016 – Does your home have a smoke alarm? According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), the answer is likely yes: NFPA research shows that most American homes have at least one. But do you know how old your smoke alarms are? If you're like most people, you're probably not so sure.

A recent survey conducted by NFPA revealed that only a small percentage of people know how old their smoke alarms are, or how often they need to be replaced. That lack of awareness is a concern for the Sycamore Fire Department and NFPA, along with fire departments throughout the country, because smoke alarms don't last forever.

"Time and again, I've seen the life-saving impact smoke alarms can have in a home fire, but I've also seen the tragedy that can result when smoke alarms aren't working properly," says Ian Wheeler, Firefighter/Paramedic of the Sycamore Fire Department. "That's why we're making a concerted effort to educate residents about the overall importance of smoke alarms, and that they do have a life limit."

NFPA 72, *National Fire Alarm Code*®, requires smoke alarms be replaced at least every 10 years, but because the public is generally unaware of this requirement, many homes have smoke alarms past their expiration date, putting people at increased risk.

As the official sponsor of Fire Prevention Week for more than 90 years, NFPA is promoting this year's Fire Prevention Week campaign, "Don't Wait - Check the Date! Replace Smoke Alarms Every 10 Years," to better educate the public about the critical importance of knowing how old their smoke alarms are and replacing them once they're 10 years old. Fire Prevention Week is October 9-15, 2016.

The Sycamore Fire Department Public Education Team will be visiting all elementary schools during the first 3 weeks of October to educate about fire safety and prevention.

The Sycamore Fire Department will also be hosting an open house at Sycamore Fire Station 2, 2100 Frantum Rd. on Saturday, October 15 from 11:00 am - 2:00 pm in support of Fire Prevention Week and this year's campaign. The event will include station tours, apparatus tours, live demonstrations and much more!

To find out how old your smoke alarm is and its expiration date, simply look on the back of the alarm where the date of manufacture is marked. The smoke alarm should be replaced 10 years from that date (*not* the date of purchase). The Sycamore Fire Department also says smoke alarms should be tested monthly, and that batteries should be replaced once a year or when they begin to chirp, signaling that they're running low.

For more information on smoke alarms and this year's Fire Prevention Week campaign, "Don't Wait: Check the Date! Replace Smoke Alarms Every 10 Years", visit [www.firepreventionweek.org](http://www.firepreventionweek.org), or you can contact the Sycamore Fire Department at (815) 895-4514, email us at [fire.prevention@cityofsycamore.com](mailto:fire.prevention@cityofsycamore.com) or visit us on Facebook at City of Sycamore Fire Department for occasional postings.