



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

HOCKING COUNTY HEALTH **DEPARTMENT**

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Fire Prevention Week is observed this year on October 5 through October 11. The theme this year is “Working smoke alarms save lives...check yours every month!” According to the National Fire Protection Association, Fire Prevention Week was established to commemorate the Great Chicago Fire of 1871. The fire killed more than 250 people, left 100,000 homeless, destroyed more than 17,400 structures and burned more than 2,000 acres. The flames started on October 8, but continued to destroy its surroundings through October 9, 1871. Legend says that a cow belonging to a woman named Mrs. Catherine O’Leary kicked over a lamp, setting fire to the barn, then eventually the whole city. Although, there are several versions of this story and many different theories as to how the fire actually started.

Smoke alarms are fairly common and can be purchased from many department stores. Working smoke alarms cut the risk of death in a house fire in half. Despite this, many people still do not have these devices in their homes and if they do, don’t check them regularly to ensure they are functional. **National Fire Prevention Week 2014 reminds you to check your smoke alarms monthly.** Most smoke alarm failures usually result from missing, disconnected, or dead batteries. This is a simple fix that could save lives. Many people remove batteries from smoke alarms due to nuisance chirping. This chirping could be the alarm warning that it needs new batteries. Try changing the batteries to see if this helps silence the chirping. If an alarm continues to sound in the kitchen, consider moving the alarm. The National Fire Alarm and Signaling Code states that unless designed specifically for the area, all smoke alarms should be at least ten feet away from cooking appliances. If there is not enough space in the kitchen to move the alarm at least ten feet away, either a photoelectric alarm or an alarm with a hush feature may be used without disabling the device.

For more information about preventing house fires, you can visit the National Fire Protection Association website at www.nfpa.org.