Statement from National Electrical Manufacturers Association (NEMA) on Smoke Alarms

Smoke alarms save lives.

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Fire Loss in the United States 2010 report, civilian home fire deaths have decreased 56% from 6,015 in 1978 to 2,640 in 2010. That is why the installation and use of smoke alarms are promoted by fire and life safety experts around the world.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), the U.S. Fire Administration, NFPA, the International Association of Fire Chiefs, the National Association of State Fire Marshals, and the 2011 California Smoke Alarm Report endorse the life-saving benefits of smoke detection and have acknowledged that both ionization and photoelectric technologies provide available safe egress time. These organizations recommend the use of both technologies to maximize protection.

NEMA member companies manufacture smoke alarms and detectors employing a wide variety of detection technologies that have been tested to meet product performance standards adopted by nationally recognized life safety standards development organizations. Tested products include the ionization and photoelectric devices that have been commercially available for years, but also new advanced fire detection technologies that are designed to provide better detection performance and enhanced immunity to unwanted alarm activations.

The industry continues to improve the performance of smoke alarms and detectors, regardless of sensor type, to more quickly detect smoldering and flaming fires. Manufacturers actively participate in the development of national consensus codes and standards by providing technical expertise to CPSC, NFPA, Underwriters Laboratories, and other standards development organizations to pave the way for technologies that detect fires faster while at the same time decrease unwanted alarm activations. NEMA and its member companies are committed to continued proactive efforts with CPSC and other partners to address concerns and further advance protection.

It is important for all Americans to have working smoke alarms installed in their homes. To be most effective, the alarms should be installed in accordance with manufacturer's instructions and the placement requirements of NFPA 72-2010, *National Fire Alarm and Signaling Code*. NFPA 72 is the installation standard that sets requirements for placement of smoke alarms and detectors for best detection performance. The code requires smoke alarms or detectors in all sleeping rooms and guest rooms, outside of each separate dwelling unit sleeping area, and on every level of a dwelling unit, including basements.

In order to be most effective, smoke alarms must be properly maintained. Batteries should be replaced regularly and alarms tested to ensure they operate as intended. Smoke alarms should be replaced in their entirety when they fail to respond to operability tests or after 10 years of the date of manufacture, whichever comes first.

More information about smoke alarms and detectors and other life saving devices can be found at http://www.lifesafetysolutionsonline.com.

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