

## Minor Smoke Alarm Annoyances Are Compromising the Safety of Millions

While many American homeowners are annoyed by sounds emitted from their smoke alarms to warn of low battery power, how many ensure the earliest possible warning is always available to their family when dangerous fire is present? A recent survey of more than 1,000 owners of homes ten years or older reveals that while aggravated by sounds such as smoke alarm low-battery chirps, homeowners are not acting when warned of low battery power, even though statistics show they should be.

**National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) statistics indicate that the primary reasons smoke alarms fail to operate in home structure fires is a missing/disconnected battery (50%) and dead/discharged battery (23%).**

The survey also reveals that homeowners are concerned about the risk of fire in their homes – particularly in locations such as the kitchen – but don't know the basics about keeping their households safe.

### **A Familiar (and annoying) Sound...Especially at Night**

- Nearly nine out of 10 homeowners (87%) have heard their smoke alarm low-battery chirp.
- Of those who have heard the sound, 43 percent report hearing the sound during the middle of the night.
- When compared to other fixable disturbances like clanking pipes, dripping faucets or a cell phone ringing, homeowners consider a middle-of-the-night low battery chirp or nuisance alarm more annoying.

### **Not Aggravated Enough to Act**

- 53 percent of homeowners deem a smoke alarm low-battery chirp annoying, but one in three homeowners (33%) say that if they heard the chirp, they would not be extremely likely to replace the battery within 24 hours.
- Seven percent of homeowners confess that they'd be more likely to disconnect the alarm than install a new battery.

### **Cooking Up Concern**

- Nearly eight in ten (78%) believe that a fire would be most likely in their kitchens than anywhere else in the home. And homeowners are right. Kitchens are the leading area of origin for home structure fires and civilian home fire injuries.\*

### **Alarming Knowledge Gaps**

A startling amount of homeowners are missing key knowledge about the basics of fire protection:

- Nearly three-quarters (74%) cannot correctly describe where smoke alarms must be placed in the home.
- Close to three in five (58%) cannot correctly answer that batteries should be changed every six months, and 68 percent believe that this action should be taken less often
- Forty-three percent admit that they do not know how often to replace smoke alarms.
- One in four homeowners confesses to never replacing their home's smoke alarms.

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\* NFPA's "Home Fires Involving Cooking Equipment" (November 2011)

#### Methodological Notes:

The Kidde Survey was conducted by Kelton Research between July 27 and August 3, 2012, among 1,018 American homeowners with battery-powered smoke alarms and homes older than 10 years, using an email invitation and an online survey. Results of any sample are subject to sampling variation. The magnitude of the variation is measurable and is affected by the number of interviews and the level of the percentages expressing the results. In this particular study, the chances are 95 in 100 that a survey result does not vary, plus or minus, by more than 3.1 percentage points from the result that would be obtained if interviews had been conducted with all persons in the universe represented by the sample. The margin of error for any subgroups will be slightly higher.