

HELP YOUR FAMILY STAY SAFE DURING POWER OUTAGES; CHANGE BATTERIES IN FLASHLIGHTS AND PORTABLE RADIOS

North Shore, March 16, 2010 – As the first day of spring approaches on **March 20**, the North Shore Fire Department wants to remind residents to make another change that's important – changing the batteries in their flashlights and portable radios.

The spring and summer months brings with them heightened awareness of severe weather. Storms, tornadoes, hurricanes and other natural disasters can instantly disrupt our daily lives by suddenly leaving us without electrical power.

A short power outage might result in no more than the inconvenience of having to reset electrical clocks. But loss of electrical power for longer durations can place us at risk of injury, illness and even death.

To save lives and prevent needless injuries in the North Shore, the North Shore Fire Department has joined forces with the *Energizer Keep Safe. Keep Going* campaign and the International Association of Fire Chiefs for the spring campaign. The program urges all Americans to adopt a simple habit: changing flashlight and portable radio batteries on the first day of spring, this year on **March 20**.

An emergency power kit can help families stay safe and connected in the event of a power outage. An emergency power kit includes these essential elements: portable radio, working flashlights, portable cell phone charger and extra batteries.

Working flashlights, one for each member of the family, help people to avoid injuries in a darkened environment. By contrast, lighted candles are a risky lighting source. Candles pose a particularly dangerous risk of fires in stormy conditions. MAX AA, AAA, C, D and 9-volt batteries represent a margin of safety and comfort.

A portable battery-powered radio provides vital information about conditions that led to the outage. It alerts the public to continuing weather threats. It is a source of advice and information about emergency help and news of when power might be restored.

A portable cell phone charger will help families stay connected during prolonged power outages.

“When the lights go out in a home, a simple flashlight can prevent injury or worse,” says Deputy Chief Robert Whitaker. A portable radio can be a family’s most informative link to the world. But neither the flashlight nor the radio will be of use unless they are in working order and have a fresh supply of batteries.”

In addition, Deputy Chief Robert Whitaker recommends that residents use the occasion of the first day of spring as a timely reminder to be ready for whatever stormy conditions might come their way. The North Shore Fire Department stands ready to help families develop home safety plans and advise people on how to prepare safety kits.

Energizer Keep Safe. Keep Going is the spring and summer counterpart of the *Change Your Clock Change Your Battery* program. The fall campaign, also sponsored by Energizer, the North Shore Fire Department and the International Association of Fire Chiefs, urges Americans to adopt the habit of changing batteries in smoke and carbon monoxide detectors when clocks are changed back to standard time.

For more information about home emergency safety, contact the North Shore Fire Department Public Education Office at jglanz@nsfire.org or 414-228-0292 or the *Energizer Keep Safe. Keep Going* hotline at 314-727-5700, x108.