

Media Release

Environment Protection Authority



GPO Box 2607 Adelaide SA 5001
250 Victoria Square Adelaide SA
T (08) 8204 2000 F (08) 8204 2020
Country areas 1800 623 445

Disposal of old smoke alarms

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The EPA is reminding householders that old smoke alarms can now be disposed of in domestic waste.

With daylight saving this weekend being a trigger for many households to change smoke alarm batteries or replace old units, the EPA says that some households may not be aware that up to two smoke alarms a week can be disposed of in domestic waste bins.

“The most common type of smoke alarm uses a small amount of radioactive material in the method for detection of smoke and other combustion products,” EPA Radiation Health Senior Scientist Graeme Palmer said.

“However, the level is very low and does not constitute a hazard to people or the environment.”

Many smoke alarms that contain radioactive material carry a label advising that they should be disposed of by returning them to the supplier or the Health Department.

Disposal of small quantities of smoke alarms that contain radioactive material in domestic waste in South Australia was made legal in early 2009 under provisions of the Radiation Protection and Control Act 1982.

Commercial and industrial smoke alarms may not be suitable for domestic disposal and advice on disposal should be sought from the EPA.

For further information about smoke alarm disposal, visit www.epa.sa.gov.au or call 8204 2004.