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## **STATE FIRE MARSHAL, ATTORNEY GENERAL JOIN TO WARN IOWANS OF HIGH PRESSURE SALES OF COSTLY, SMOKE ALARM SYSTEMS**

Des Moines, IOWA --- The State Fire Marshal Division and the Iowa Attorney General are warning consumers of recent complaints in the Eastern and Southern parts of Iowa where salespeople are reported to be selling smoke and heat detector systems using high pressure sales tactics. In one recent complaint from Eastern Iowa, a sales person used the fact of recent high visibility fatal fires to convince a family to buy a smoke alarm system for over \$2,500. Normal dual sensor smoke alarms cost an average of \$23 per unit.

State Fire Marshal Ray Reynolds says, "A smoke detector is the single most important thing you need to get out of a house safely during a fire. But be very cautious when a sales person shows you videos and pictures of fatality victims as a method to sell a product." In many cases these costly systems come with heat detectors and smoke detectors. Heat detectors are not intended to be used in residential applications.

Fire Marshal Reynolds and Attorney General Tom Miller urge consumers to consider the following when thinking about buying smoke alarms or smoke alarm systems:

Check out the alternatives before buying. Check out Consumer Reports Magazine or other information sources for product reviews and recommendations.

- Check with your local hardware or other retail store for smoke detectors. Store-purchased detectors are just as efficient and legal to use and cost a fraction of what the door-to-door systems cost.
- Don't buy a smoke alarm system from a door-to-door seller who drops in, "out of the blue." A spur-of-the-moment decision is not an informed decision. If you have any questions, ask for more time to make a decision. Stay away from sales people that demand an immediate decision or promise you a prize or discount if you act immediately.
- Don't fall for an emotional sales pitch that evokes fear your family members are in danger if you don't buy the product.
- Smoke detectors last 10 years. Don't let someone convince you to replace detectors that are less than 8-10 years old.
- Don't buy from sales people that ask for a friends list and ask you not to tell the friends about the product.
- If unsure, seek advice from your fire department. After all, they are the fire experts.

Your safety is our first priority. For questions about fire safety, contact the State Fire Marshal Division at 515-725-6150. You can also review this link for information on smoke detectors:  
[www.dps.state.ia.us/fm/main/smoke\\_detector\\_project/PDFs/fa-250f.pdf](http://www.dps.state.ia.us/fm/main/smoke_detector_project/PDFs/fa-250f.pdf)

If you wish to file a consumer complaint about a smoke alarm system seller, contact the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division by calling, toll free, 1-888-777-4590 (Des Moines-area consumers should call 281-5926), or by filing a complaint on line at:  
[www.iowaAttorneyGeneral.gov](http://www.iowaAttorneyGeneral.gov), or by US mail to: Consumer Protection Division, 1305 E. Walnut Street, Des Moines, IA 50319.

**To enroll in the DPS E-mail Notification system simply log on to <https://dpsemailnotify.iowa.gov> and follow the instructions to enroll as a new user.**