



Smoke Alarms

Most fatal fires occur at night when people are asleep. Often, victims never wake up. A working smoke alarm will detect smoke and sound an alarm to alert you, giving you precious time to escape.



Smoke Alarm Basics

- Install smoke alarms outside each sleeping area and on every level of your home.
- Test smoke alarms every month and replace batteries annually.
- Replace smoke alarms every 10 years.
- Have a home fire escape plan and practice it twice a year.
- When the smoke alarm sounds, **GET OUT and STAY OUT!**

Why should my home have Smoke Alarms?

In the event of a fire, a smoke alarm can save your life and those of your loved ones. They are a very important means of preventing house and apartment fire fatalities by providing an early warning signal -- so you and your family can escape. Smoke alarms are one of the best safety devices you can buy and install to protect yourself, your family, and your home from fire.

What types of Smoke Alarms are available?

There are many different brands of smoke alarms available on the market but they fall under two basic types: ionization and photoelectric.

Ionization alarms sound more quickly when a flaming, fast moving fire occurs.

Photoelectric alarms are quicker at sensing smoldering, smoky fires. There are also combination smoke alarms that combine ionization and photoelectric into one unit, called **dual sensor smoke alarms**.

Because both ionization and photoelectric smoke alarms are better at detecting distinctly different yet potentially fatal fires, and because homeowners cannot predict

what type of fire might start in a home, we recommend the installation of both ionization and photoelectric or dual sensor smoke alarms.

In addition to the basic types of alarms, there are alarms made to meet the needs of people with hearing disabilities. These alarms may use strobe lights that flash and/or vibrate to assist in alerting those who are unable to hear standard smoke alarms when they sound.

Okay, where do I put them?

Install smoke alarms on every level of your home, including the basement. For extra safety, install smoke alarms both inside and outside sleeping areas. Since smoke and many deadly gases rise, installing your smoke alarms on the ceiling will provide you with the earliest warning possible. Always follow the manufacturer's installation instructions.

Where would I get Smoke Alarms?

Many hardware, home supply, or general merchandise stores carry smoke alarms. If you are unsure where to buy one in your community, call your local fire department (848-6601 or 848-6602) and we can provide you with some suggestions.

Are Smoke Alarms hard to install?

If your smoke alarms are hard wired, that is wired into the electrical system, you will need to have a qualified electrician do the initial installation or install replacements. For battery powered smoke alarms, all you will need for installation is a screw driver. For all smoke alarm installations, be sure you follow the manufacturer's instructions because there are differences between the various brands. If you are uncomfortable standing on a ladder, ask a relative or friend for help. The fire department will install a smoke alarm in your home for you. Call your local fire department station 1 @ 848-6601 (Campbell Dr.) or station 2 @ 848-6602 (Civic Dr.) if you have problems installing a smoke alarm.

Helpful Tip

When daylight saving time begins and ends is a good time to change batteries in all smoke alarms. If your smoke alarm starts making a "chirping" noise, replace the batteries and reset it.

How do I Keep my Smoke Alarm working?

If you have a smoke alarm with batteries:

Smoke Alarms powered by long-lasting batteries are designed to replace the entire unit according to manufacturer's instructions.

1. In standard type battery powered smoke alarms, the batteries need to be replaced at least once per year and the whole unit should be replaced every 10 years.

2. In hard-wired, battery backup smoke alarms, the batteries need to be checked monthly, and replaced at least once per year. The entire unit should be replaced every 10 years.

What if the Alarm goes off while I'm cooking?

Then it's doing its job. Do not disable your smoke alarm if it alarms due to cooking or other non-fire causes. You may not remember to put the batteries back in the alarm after cooking. Instead clear the air by waving a towel near the alarm, leaving the batteries in place. The alarm may need to be moved to a new location. Some of the newer models have a "hush" button that silences nuisance alarms.

How long will my Smoke Alarm last?

Most alarms installed today have a life span of 10 years. After this time, the entire unit should be replaced. It is a good idea to write the date of purchase with a marker on the inside of your alarm so you will know when to replace it. Some of the newer alarms already have the purchase date written inside. In any event, always follow the manufacturer's instructions for replacement.

Anything else I should know?

You should have an escape plan!

- have an escape plan showing two ways out of every room in your home, especially bedrooms.
- Regularly practice your escape plan by holding fire drills in your home.
- Ensure windows used for escaping can be opened easily.
- Ensure your house numbers are clearly visible from the street.
- When the smoke alarm sounds, get out fast. You may only have seconds to escape safely.
- If you see smoke, try another way out. If you cannot avoid the smoke, crawl under it on your hands and knees.
- Do not stop or go back for anything. Possessions can be replaced, you cannot.
- Remember fire spreads quickly. Get out fast and stay out. Call 911, once outside as quickly as possible.
- If you cannot get out, close the door and cover vents and cracks around doors with cloth or tape to keep smoke out. Use a phone or find a window to alert people of your location.