

SMOKE ALARMS

Properly installed and maintained smoke alarms provide the entire household an early warning of a fire. In fact, a home with properly placed and working smoke alarms doubles the likelihood of survival. Help keep every loved one safe by learning how to install and maintain smoke alarms.

QUICK TIPS

- Memorize the sound of smoke alarms so you can react quickly when they are alerting you.
- Test your smoke alarms every month.
- Consider buying a combined smoke and carbon monoxide alarm.
- Install smoke alarms throughout the home, not just near the kitchen.
- Replace smoke alarms every 8-10 years.

SMOKE ALARM SAFETY TIPS

IONIZATION VS. PHOTOELECTRIC

Every smoke alarm may appear to be the same, but there is some difference between the two most common models.

- Ionization: reacts more quickly to a flaming, fast-moving fire.
- Photoelectric: senses a smoldering, smoky fire more quickly.

For maximum safety, install a mix of ionization and photoelectric smoke alarms on every floor.

SMOKE ALARM INSTALLATION

The National Fire Protection Association reports that in two-thirds of home fire deaths, no smoke alarm was found.

- Install smoke alarms on every level, inside every bedroom and outside each sleeping area of the building.
- Place alarms on the ceiling or high on a wall.
- Alarms should be placed no closer than 10 feet from a stove, as everyday cooking may be a trigger.
- Hearing limited or deaf individuals can use alarms with strobe lights and bed shakers.
- Hard-wired alarms need to be installed by a professional.
- Consider purchasing a combined smoke and carbon monoxide alarm, especially if the home uses gas appliances.

SMOKE ALARM MAINTENANCE

Installing a smoke alarm is important, but they need to be maintained to help make sure the household stays safe. In 17 percent of fatal home fires, smoke alarms were found in the residence but were not working.

- Smoke alarms should be tested every month to make sure they are still working.
- In smoke alarms that use traditional batteries, they should be changed twice a year.
- Alarms should be replaced every eight to 10 years. Over time their sensors become less sensitive.