



Smoke alarms detect and alert people to fire in its early stages, giving them the time needed to escape safely.

## SMOKE ALARM TALKING POINTS

### TYPES OF SMOKE ALARMS

There is a difference between smoke alarms and smoke detectors:

- A **smoke alarm** detects smoke and the unit sounds the alarm.
- A **smoke detector** is part of a fire alarm system that uses a separate fire alarm control unit. The detector senses the smoke and sends a signal to the control unit to sound the alarm.

There are two different types of smoke alarms: ionization and photoelectric.

- An **ionization alarm** is typically more responsive to a flaming fire, such as a pan fire.
- A **photoelectric alarm** is typically more responsive to a smoldering fire, such as when a lit cigarette is dropped on a sofa.

### DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING SMOKE ALARMS

- There are some smoke alarms with strobes or the ability to be used with strobes, also called visible notification appliances, that signal to awaken those who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- The use of tactile notification appliances (such as a pillow or bed shaker) is also available. These are activated by the sound of the smoke alarm.
- A complex low frequency audible signal is used to activate the notification appliances.
- Smoke alarms currently on the market do not produce this low frequency signal. However, separate notification appliances are available that do produce this signal and are activated by the sound of the smoke alarm.

### INSTALLATION

- Smoke alarms should be installed in every bedroom, outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home.
- Smoke alarms should be installed at least 10 feet from cooking areas to prevent unwanted alarms.



Replace batteries once a year, or when the alarm “chirps,” warning that the battery is low.

### MAINTENANCE

- Smoke alarms should be tested monthly using the test button. Everyone in the home should know the sound of the alarm.
- Some smoke alarms are available with nonrechargeable, nonreplaceable 10-year batteries. The batteries in these alarms are not intended to be replaced.
- For smoke alarms that are powered only by replaceable batteries, annual replacement of the battery is best practice.
- Smoke alarms with replaceable batteries should get new batteries when the alarm chirps, warning that the batteries are low.
- Replace all smoke alarms, including those that use 10-year batteries and hardwired alarms (when they are 10 years old) or (if they don't respond properly when tested).

The **Indiana Department of Homeland Security** is partnering with fire departments to install **10,000** smoke alarms across Indiana over two years. Learn more at [GetAlarmed.in.gov](http://GetAlarmed.in.gov)

