



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.

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.

The U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) created a few [helpful resources](#), including a series of pictographs to help educate the public on fire prevention. Several topics addressed in the pictographs are [smoke alarm safety](#) and where to place [smoke alarms in the home](#). For a brief walkthrough about the proper placement of smoke alarms, the USFA has made a [video available](#) on the agency's YouTube channel.

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 weren't 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 once a year.
- Alarms should be replaced every eight to 10 years. Over time their sensors become less sensitive.

RESOURCES

- [Home Fire Campaign \(American Red Cross\)](#)
- [Check Alarm Batteries \(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention\)](#)
- [Smoke Alarms \(National Fire Protection Association\)](#)

