

Smoke Alarms

Review of smoke alarm installation, safety and maintenance

- Read and follow the manufacturer's installation and maintenance instructions exactly.
- Install fresh batteries in your smoke alarms at least once a year.
- Occasionally vacuum dust and cobwebs from detectors.
- Don't allow anyone to disconnect or "borrow" the batteries from your smoke alarms. A smoke alarm cannot work unless it is connected to a power source.
- Smoke alarms have a useful life of about ten years. At that age they should be replaced, even if they seem to be in working order.
- If a smoke alarm's warning alarm sounds, don't panic. Stay close to the floor and get out of the building. Before opening any doors, check the temperature. If the door feels hot to the touch, don't open it. Use an alternate exit.

Practice a fire escape plan

In addition to installing smoke alarms in your home, you should develop a fire escape plan and practice it at least twice a year with all members of your household.

- In the event of a fire, every family member should know at least two ways out of each room.
- Stay as close to the floor as possible during your escape. Hot air and smoke rise, so the air nearest the floor may be safer to breathe.
- If you encounter a closed door during your escape, feel the door before opening it. If it's hot to the touch, use another exit. The heat could indicate fire on the other side of the door.
- Teach your children how to escape in case of a fire -- not to hide under a bed or in a closet.
- Some individuals, particularly children, older people and those with special needs, may not wake up to the sound of a smoke alarm. You should be aware of this when developing your home fire escape plan.
- Designate a well-lit place, a safe distance away from your home, where everyone will meet in the event of a fire. This will help firefighters determine if anyone else is still inside the home. And remember; never return to a burning building for any reason.

Smoke alarms (detectors) must be located properly in order to provide early warning of fires. They should be located in all of the following locations:

- In every bedroom
- In hallways outside of bedrooms
- At the top of stairs inside the home
- On each level if dwelling has two or more levels

Smoke alarms should not be located:

- Near heaters or heater vents

- Directly outside bathroom doors
- In kitchens
- In garages dust, water vapor and cooking can all cause false alarms. Smoke alarms should not be located in areas where these materials are produced.

Mounting Guidelines

- Smoke alarms should be located on smooth flat ceilings if possible.
- If mounting on sloped ceilings, smoke alarms should be placed near the peak (top) of the ceiling.
- Smoke alarms on ceiling should not be placed closer than 4 inches to the adjoining wall.
- If the smoke alarm must be mounted on the wall near the ceiling, the top of the detector should be placed within 4 to 12 inches of the ceiling.