

How Do I Maintain My Smoke Alarms?

It is very important to test and clean all smoke alarms regularly.

- ◆ Test your smoke alarms by pressing the test button once a month.
- ◆ Vacuum your smoke alarms twice a year to remove any dust or dirt from the sensing chamber.
- ◆ Change the batteries twice a year.
- ◆ Smoke alarms do not last forever. Check the expiry date and replace any alarms that are 10+ years old.

What Do I Do If My Smoke Alarm Sounds?

Smoke alarms give you and your family a warning, but it is your responsibility to get yourselves out of your home safely. Your family will do the right thing if you've planned ahead for a fire emergency.

- ◆ Ensure everyone knows what the smoke alarm sounds like.
- ◆ Plan your escape routes. Know at least two (2) ways out of every room and choose a meeting place outside your home where everyone can gather.
- ◆ Practice your home escape plan at least twice a year. (Tip: the two time changes every year are a great time to practice your escape plan and change the batteries on your smoke alarm)
- ◆ When a smoke alarm sounds, leave right away. Go directly to your family's meeting place and call 911 from a mobile phone or a neighbours phone.
- ◆ Remember that once you are out, stay out! Never go back inside a burning building.



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FOR EMERGENCIES CALL 9-1-1!

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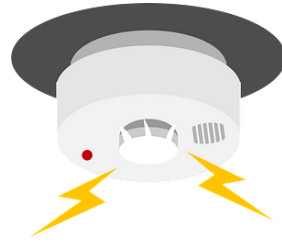
Home Smoke Alarms

Most fatal home fires happen at night while people are sleeping. In reality, the smell of smoke may not wake a sleeping person. Fires produce poisonous gases and smoke which can numb the senses and put you into a deeper sleep.

Inexpensive home smoke alarms can save your life by sounding an alarm that alerts you to a fire, and giving you time to make a safe escape. Home fire deaths have steadily decreased as the numbers of home with working smoke detectors has increased. Having a working smoke alarm in your home, reduces your risk of dying in a fire by half.



Choosing a Smoke Alarm



When buying a smoke alarm, check to make sure that it has been tested by CAN/ULC S531-M standard by an approved testing agency. There are two types of smoke alarms available for residential use. One type is called an **ionization** alarm because it monitors “ions,” electrically charged particles. Smoke particles entering the sensing chamber change the electrical balance in the air. The alarm sounds when the change in electrical balance reaches a pre-set level. The other type is called a **photoelectric** alarm because the sensing chamber uses a beam of light and a light sensor. Smoke particles entering the chamber change the amount of light that reaches the light sensor. The alarm sounds when the smoke density reaches a pre-set level. Both types of smoke alarms are acceptable and perform effectively, provided they are installed and maintained correctly.

Some smoke alarms are available that have strobe lights for those that are hard of hearing, while other models have talking technology that announces “fire” or “replace alarm.” Some smoke alarms run on batteries that need to be replaced twice a year and other models can be hardwired directly into your home. You can even get a smoke/carbon monoxide combination alarm!

How Many Smoke Alarms?

It is recommended that every home has a smoke alarm outside each sleeping area and on every level of the residence, including the basement. For maximum protection, consider installing a smoke alarm in every bedroom.

Ensure everyone sleeping in your home can hear the sound of the smoke alarm even when the bedroom doors are closed. If anyone is hearing impaired, install special smoke alarms that will alert them.



Where do I Install My Smoke Alarms?

Smoke rises, therefore install smoke alarms high on a wall or ceiling. Make sure to read the manufacturer’s instructions carefully and follow them. Do not install an alarm near a window, door, or air register where drafts could prevent smoke from reaching the alarm.