

Smoke Alarms

Fast Facts

- Properly installed and maintained smoke alarms save lives and protect against injury and loss due to fire.*
- The fire death rate in homes with working smoke alarms is 36% less than the rate for homes without this protection.*
- Having a working smoke alarm reduces one's chances of dying in a fire by nearly half.**
- From 2009-2013, no smoke alarms were present, or none operated in nearly one-third of the reported home fires.*
- An estimated 890 lives could be saved each year if all homes had working smoke alarms.*
- Thirty-eight percent of reported home fire deaths from 2009 -2013 occurred in homes with no smoke alarms or no working smoke alarms.*
- Almost half (46%) of the smoke alarms had missing or disconnected batteries. Nuisance alarms were the leading reason for disconnected smoke alarms.
- Dead batteries cause one-quarter (24%) of the smoke alarm failures.
- Sprinklers and smoke alarms together cut your risk of dying in a home fire 82% in relation to having neither.*
- Only 26 percent of families have developed and practiced a home fire escape plan.***

Preparedness Tips

- Place a smoke alarm on every level of your home and outside sleeping areas. If you keep bedroom doors shut, place a smoke alarm in each bedroom.
- Smoke alarms should be tested monthly, and batteries replaced yearly, or as soon as you hear a low-battery warning which usually sounds like a "chirping" noise.
- Teach children what the smoke alarm sounds like and what to do when they hear it.
- Keep smoke alarms clean by vacuuming over and around it regularly. Dust and debris can interfere with its operation.
- Install smoke alarms away from windows, doors, or ducts that can interfere with their operation.
- Never remove the battery from or disable a smoke alarm. If your smoke alarm is sounding "nuisance alarms," try locating it further from kitchens or bathrooms.
- Plan regular fire drills to practice your escape plan ensuring everyone in your home knows exactly what to do when the smoke alarm sounds.

- Smoke alarms wear out. Replace your alarms every 10 years. If you can't remember when you last replaced them, buy new alarms that are interconnected if possible. Install them using manufacturer's instructions and hire an electrician for installing alarms that are hard-wired into your home's electrical system.

Where to Go – Whom to Call

- Alarm activating – Call 9-1-1 and exit residence
- Alarm chirping – Replace battery – Ask friend or family member if assistance is needed
- Alarm Replacement – Purchase online or from a local hardware or retail store
- Alarm installation – Self-install per manufacturer instructions
- Alarm Installation assistance - Ask friend or family member if assistance is needed
- Additional Alarm Installation Resources:
 - Local Electrical Contractors
 - Local Handyman Service Providers
 - American Red Cross - <https://americanredcross.wufoo.com/forms/x7ag8qv1emhpcb/>

*Sources: National Fire Protection Association, * U.S. Fire Administration, ** and the American Red Cross****