

Smoke Alarm FACTS



Most fatal fires occur at night while people are asleep. You may not wake up if there is a fire in your home because poisonous gases and smoke from the fire will numb the senses in a very short time.

Where do your smoke alarms go?

Here are some suggestions that will help you install your smoke alarms in the locations which will best protect you and your family.

Minimum safety requirements suggest that smoke alarms be installed outside every sleeping area and on every level of the home, including the basement. For extra protection, the Office of the Fire Marshal recommends that one be installed in the dining room, living room, utility room and in hallways. If your family sleeps with the bedroom door closed, it is important to install a smoke alarm inside the bedroom. Smoke alarms installed in the basement should be at the bottom of the stairway which leads to the floor above.

Smoke alarms should be mounted on the ceiling approximately 15 centimetres (six inches) from the wall. Do not put smoke alarms at the top of stairways – dead air spaces may hamper smoke from reaching the

smoke alarm and result in a delayed warning in case of fire.

Can you hear your smoke alarm at night?

Some people are very sound sleepers and most noises won't awaken them. To verify that your smoke alarms will alert members of your family, test them at night when they are asleep. This will ensure that all members will be awakened by the alarm and able to escape a fire in time. You will have peace of mind knowing that your family will be alerted by the sound of the smoke alarm.

How to choose a smoke alarm.

Smoke alarms are powered in two different ways.

Battery-powered smoke alarms are easily installed yourself by following manufacturer's specifications.

Smoke alarms can also be wired directly into your home's electrical system. This should be done by a qualified electrician. These hard-wired smoke alarms should be purchased with a battery back-up, so that if there is



a power failure, the smoke alarms will still function properly. No matter which type of smoke alarm you choose, follow manufacturer's instructions about installation, testing and maintenance.

Maintaining your smoke alarm.

Test your smoke alarms every month by pressing and holding the test button for a few seconds. The alarm should sound immediately.

If a smoke alarm does not have a test button, it is probably an older, obsolete model and should be replaced. You should replace your smoke alarms at least every 10 years.

Replace your smoke alarm's battery at least once a year, more often if necessary.

A good reminder is: **Change your clock – Change your battery!**

Don't be a battery bandit – never remove the battery from a smoke alarm for any other use!

If your smoke alarm is beeping sporadically, it could be in need of cleaning.

Clean your smoke alarms at least twice a year. Remove the cover and wipe it with a damp cloth. Gently vacuum the sensor unit inside. Replace the cover and test the smoke alarm to make sure it is working properly. If it doesn't stop beeping, replace the unit.

Be prepared for the sound of your smoke alarm.

The sound of a smoke alarm can be very frightening and disorienting, especially if it goes off in the middle of the night. To be prepared, you should develop and practice a fire escape plan. Establish at least two exits from each room and arrange to meet at a place away from the home. Once you have escaped, stay out of the building. Call the fire department from a neighbour's house.

Knowing what to do when the smoke alarm sounds will help you and your family escape safely.

The proper installation of smoke alarms and a practised fire escape plan could save your family's lives in case of fire.

