

Smoke Detectors

There are five leading causes of fires at the home:

- Heating sources, like furnaces, wood stoves and space heaters.
- Cooking
- Arson
- Electrical distribution
- Careless smoking

Smoke detectors can make the difference... Most deaths occur from smoke rather than flames. Smoke contains many super-heated poisonous gases and can cause you to become disoriented.

- 80 percent of all fire deaths take place in residences not equipped with working smoke detectors.
- Smoke detectors can provide early warning of fires, allowing time for families to escape and firefighters to arrive before the fire grows.
- Smoke detectors are inexpensive to buy. Many between \$10 and \$20.
- Smoke detectors make great gifts for friends and relatives.

How they Work....

IONIZATION DETECTORS -- They contain radioactive material that ionizes the air within the detector making an electrical path between two sensors. When smoke enters the detector, the smoke molecules attach themselves to the ions. The change in electrical current flow triggers the alarm. These are most effective for sensing flaming fires.

PHOTOELECTRIC DETECTORS - - They contain a light source and a photocell, which is activated by light. Light from the bulb reflects off the smoke particles and is directed towards the photocell. The photocell is then activated to trigger the alarm. These are most effective for sensing smoldering fires.

Your safest bet is a combination of both types.

Things to consider ...

- Placement - - Which areas of the house are more prone to fire.
- Size of the home - - How many do you need. In general, you should have at least one detector per floor. But for maximum protection, place one in each room.
- Warranty - - Many have a 5-year warranty.
- Malfunction signal - - It warns you when bulbs or batteries need replacing.
- Sleeping areas - - One detector in a short hallway, hallways longer than 30 feet should have one at each end.
- Place device at the top of each stairwell and at each end of a long hallway.
- Keep device away from cooking fumes to avoid false alarms.
- Basement - -mount close to the stairway (for example, on the ceiling above the bottom step), but not at the top of the stairway or near a furnace exhaust.

Placement ...

- On the ceilings keep it at least 4 inches away from the dead air space near walls and corners.
- On the walls place detectors 4 to 12 inches below the ceiling and away from corners. Keep them high, smoke rises.
- Don't place detectors closer than 3 feet from air registers. This will keep smoke from reaching the detector
- Don't place on un-insulated exterior walls or ceiling. Temperature extremes can affect batteries. Temperature differences may keep smoke from reaching the detector.

Maintenance...

- Replace batteries every year or as needed. Keep spares on hand.
- Replace bulbs every three years or as needed. Keep spares handy.
- Replace damaged detectors.
- Check alarm every 30 days.
- Clean face and grillwork often.

Plan your escape plan now! NOT when there is a fire!

