

Smoke Detectors

When a change of occupant occurs in all one and two family homes and some condominium units by sale or rental, smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors and a 2A 10BC fire extinguisher are required.

Why should my home have smoke alarms?

In the event of a fire, a smoke alarm can save your life and those of your loved ones. They are the single most important means of preventing house and apartment fire fatalities by providing an early warning signal.

Where do I put them?

Install smoke alarms on every level of your home, including the basement. Many fatal fires begin late at night or in the early morning. For extra safety, install smoke alarms both inside and outside the sleeping area. Keep your bedroom doors closed while you are asleep to help prevent fire spread.

Smoke alarms should be installed on the ceiling or 6 to 12 inches below the ceiling on side walls. Since smoke and many deadly gases rise, installing your smoke alarms at the proper level will provide you with the earliest warning possible. Always follow the manufacturer's installation instructions.

To avoid false alarms and/or improper operation, avoid installation of smoke detectors in the following areas:

Kitchens: smoke from cooking may cause a nuisance alarm.

Bathrooms: excessive steam from a shower may cause a nuisance alarm.

Forced air ducts used for heating or air conditioning or paddle fans: air movement may prevent smoke from reaching detectors.

Near furnaces of any type: air and dust movement and normal combustion products may cause a nuisance alarm.

The "Dead Air" space where the ceiling meets the wall.

The peak of an "A" frame type of ceiling "Dead Air" at the top may prevent smoke from reaching the detector.

What if the alarm goes off while I'm cooking?

Then it's doing its job. Do not remove the batteries or disable your smoke alarm if it goes off due to cooking or other non-fire causes. You may not remember to put the batteries

back in or reconnect the alarm after cooking. Instead, clear the air by waving a towel near the alarm, leaving the batteries in place. If this happens frequently, the alarm may have to be moved to a new location or you may have to install a different type of detector.

Are smoke alarms hard to install?

In most cases, all you will need is a screwdriver. Many brands are self-adhesive and will automatically stick to the wall or ceiling where they are placed. However, be sure to follow the directions from the manufacturer because each brand is different

How do I keep my smoke alarms working?

Smoke alarms are very easy to take care of. Keep them clean of dust and debris. Never decorate, put stickers on or paint over a smoke detector. Change the batteries at least once a year, however it is recommended that you change them every time you adjust your clocks for daylight savings time. Use only the type of batteries recommended on the detector. Some smoke alarms are considered to be "hard wired." This means they are connected to the household electrical system and may or may not have battery back-up. It's important to test every smoke alarm monthly. And always use new batteries when replacing old ones. If your smoke detector sounds an alarm when no smoke is present, it may be defective or it might have a low battery.

How long will my smoke alarm last?

About eight-to-ten years, after which it should be replaced. Like most electrical devices, smoke alarms wear out. You may want to write the purchase date with a marker on the inside of your unit. That way, you'll know when to replace it. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions for replacement.