

# Smoke Detectors

*Information about smoke detectors and their use in the home*



Smoke detectors sense smoke and sound an alarm to warn residents of a fire. Almost every day a smoke detector saves somebody's life. A smoke detector can cut your risk of dying in a home fire nearly in half.

- ❖ **Smoke detector types** – **Photo electric smoke detectors** detect a slow smoldering smoky fire while **Ionized smoke detectors** sense hot gases given off by a faster moving fire. *It is recommended that each type be installed in the hall near sleeping rooms.* Be sure the smoke detectors you buy carry the label of a certified, independent testing lab, like UL. Several types of detectors are available. Some are powered by 9 Volt batteries, others are powered by the household electrical current and some combine both. All will offer protection provided they are installed and maintained properly. Smoke detectors are readily available at hardware stores.
  - **Wireless:** Emerging technology offers the ability to have your smoke detectors interconnected so they will all sound when one activates—all without wires running between them. This is a great way to ensure that you will hear the alarm should one of the detectors in your home activate, wherever you may be in the house.
  - **Lithium powered:** Lithium powered smoke detectors have non-removable power cells that last for ten years and provide a solution to the problem of missing or dead batteries in smoke detectors.
  
- ❖ **Smoke alarm maintenance**
  - **INSTALL** smoke detectors at or near the ceiling in each sleeping area and on each level of your home. Read and follow the manufacturer's installation and maintenance instructions.
  - **TEST** your smoke detector each month. This ensures it is working and familiarizes your family to the alarm sound.
  - **MAINTAIN** batteries by replacing annually. A good practice is to change them during an annual event or holiday. A “chirping” sound indicates that the battery is low and needs to be replaced. Clean your smoke detector using a vacuum and/or dust brush without removing the alarm's cover.
  - **REPLACE** any smoke detector that is more than ten years old, with a new detector.



## ❖ **The Fire Emergency**

Knowing what to do to save life and property in the event of fire may be the most important protection you can provide. A balanced home fire protection plan should include installing and maintaining smoke detectors and making and practicing a home escape plan.

Make sure everyone is familiar with the sound of the smoke detector.

Plan and practice a home fire escape plan with your family. Know at least two ways out of each room and plan a meeting place outside.

When the alarm sounds, go directly to the meeting place and call the fire department from a neighbor's phone. Never go back inside the building.