

# SMOKE ALARMS SAVE LIVES

**When fire strikes you may have less than one minute to safely get out of the building.**

- Having working smoke alarms in your home can double your chances of survival if a fire occurs.
- Home fire deaths have been cut in half since the early 1970's when smoke alarms were first marketed.

**...But they can't help you if they are missing or don't work.**

- Tragically about 3,000 people still die in fires each year in the U.S.
- 40% of the fire deaths that occur each year in the U.S. take place in the 4% of homes without working smoke alarms.

**...Be Safe, Be Aware, Be Protected**

- Install smoke alarms throughout your home.
- Test them monthly.
- Replace batteries when you change your clocks.
- Never disable them or take out the batteries while cooking.



**Fires produce heat, smoke and toxic gases.**

Smoke alarms warn residents in the event of a fire. They alert you and give you a chance to leave the building before your escape route is blocked by deadly smoke, heat and toxic gases.

**When the alarm sounds:**

- Leave the building.
- ***Get out, Stay out!***
- Go to the family meeting place.
- Call 9-1-1 from a neighbor's home.

**Special smoke alarms are available for the hearing impaired.**

The alarm can be wired to a light, which flashes when the detector is in alarm. A vibrating alert unit can also be used under a pillow while the person is asleep.

**Plan and practice a home fire escape route.**

- Have two ways out of every room.
- Discuss the plan so each member of



## FireFACTORS

Office of the State Fire Marshal • Department of Fire Services

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the family understands what to do in case of emergency.

- Choose a place outside the home where family members can meet to be sure everyone is safely out of the building.

**Practice, practice, practice...**  
**Conduct drills frequently so actions become automatic behaviors.**

- Hold a family fire drill during the day, while everyone is awake and another one at night while children are asleep to see how they respond.
- Following the drill, make adjustments to the plan.
- Does someone in the family, who may be too young or physically impaired, need assistance?
- An adult can go to their room and help that person to an escape route.
- If a child sleeps through the alarm they may need to be awakened by an adult.
- Consider purchasing a folding escape ladder as a secondary means of exit from upper floors.

**All homes need fire protection.**

All homes in Massachusetts are required to have smoke alarms and most are required to have carbon monoxide alarms.

Contact your local fire department and ask about smoke alarm installation programs.

**General guidelines for smoke alarm placement:**

- On every level of your home.
- In hallways outside the bedroom.

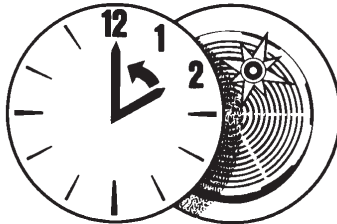
- At the top of open stairways.
- At the base of cellar stairs.
- Inside the bedroom for sound sleepers or smokers.
- Contact your local fire department for exact locations.

**Types of Smoke Alarms**

There are requirements for types of alarms you must have when your home was built or when selling it. It is strongly recommended that everyone have:

- Photoelectric alarms only within 20' of kitchens and baths.
- Photoelectric and ionization detection 20' beyond kitchens and baths (either a dual detector or two separate detectors).

**CHANGE YOUR CLOCK**



**CHANGE YOUR BATTERY**

**Maintenance**

- Once a month, vacuum or blow out dust from the alarms.
- Push the test button.
- If the alarm uses regular batteries, change them at least once a year. An easy way to remember is to change the batteries when you change your clocks. A “chirping” sound indicates that it’s time to change the batteries.
- Don’t paint smoke alarms!

**10-Year Lifespan**

If your smoke alarms are ten years old or more it’s time to replace them with new ones. There’s a label on the alarm with the date of manufacture. If it doesn’t have a label, it’s already more than ten years old. If you don’t know how old they are it’s best to install new ones.

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# TEST SMOKE ALARMS MONTHLY