

Fact Sheet



Smoke Detectors... the Alarm for Life! A Guide for Consumers

Smoke alarms detect the most minimal wisp of smoke. These detectors provide an early warning in the event of a fire. Where seconds count, the smoke alarm screams an early warning to get up and get out.

If every home had one or more working smoke detectors, almost 900 lives could be saved each year. The presence and proper maintenance of smoke alarms increase your chances of surviving a catastrophic fire by 50%. Thinking that you might smell smoke or the byproducts of a fire while you are sleeping is not true and not realistic. The toxic chemicals found in smoke have the ability to sedate and take you into a deeper realm of sleep.

A fire burning in a house for 1 minute grows to 3 times its original size; 11 times by 4 minutes and at 6 minutes, it reaches 50 times its original size. Because of this fact, most people who are caught in a fire die in the first 5 minutes of a fire. When smoke alarms are maintained, there is no reason for a fire related death to occur.

Maintaining Your Smoke Detector

- ▶ All smoke detectors are to be tested for operation once each month by briefly pressing the test button.
- ▶ AC smoke detectors with battery backup also need to be tested each month as well.
- ▶ Batteries shall not be removed from working smoke detectors for any reason.
- ▶ Smoke detectors are susceptible to dust, small bugs and spiders. Vacuum and dust each smoke alarm often to insure proper performance.
- ▶ Keep spare replacement batteries on hand.
- ▶ Replace batteries in all your smoke detectors twice each year. A good rule of thumb is to change your clock, change your smoke alarm batteries.
- ▶ If your smoke alarm "chirps" the batteries are low. Promptly replace the batteries and reset the alarm.



Smoke Detectors Provide an Early Warning in the Event of a Fire – Where seconds count.

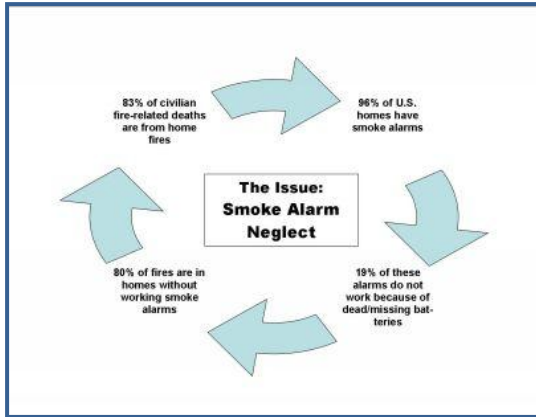
- Test smoke alarms at least once a month using the test button.
- It will be important that every individual in your household, office and work place knows the sound of the smoke alarm.



- It is vital that every individual knows what the sound of the smoke alarm means. **GET OUT NOW!** *Note: If children are not awakened by the sound, establish a plan for waking them in case of fire or disaster.*



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With 96% of all households in the United States having smoke alarms, why is this training document necessary?
Active maintenance of smoke alarms is required and necessary but is not happening as it should.



If someone in your home is hearing impaired, it is important to also install a smoke alarm designed for them. It may be flashing lights or vibration to better alert the household members who cannot hear the warning of a standard smoke alarm.

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Location, Location and Location!

- Installing smoke alarms on every level of the home, including the basement, and in all sleeping areas.
- Most smoke alarms need to be removed and replaced every 8 to 10 years, even those that are hard-wired with battery backup. It is important to note the purchase date on the inside of your alarms so you know when to replace them.

If the smoke alarm goes off while you are cooking – DO NOT DISABLE IT! Some smoke detectors have a “hush” button, but if yours does not, wave a towel near the alarm to clear the air.

If the smoke alarm goes off often due to cooking or ventilation issues, it may be necessary to adjust the location of the unit by moving it a short distance away from the kitchen or the ventilation duct.

Additional Fire Safety Information

Plan and practice a fire escape plan with your entire family, office and or workplace. Practice staying low, and crawling to safety under smoke. Remember smoke alarms only sound the first warning. You and those with you need to know what to do in case the alarm sounds.

Please, do not leave matches or lighters of any type lying around for little hands to find. Where children are involved, toy or novelty type lights are not an option.

If you experience a fire, get out and stay out of the building. Call the fire department (9.1.1.) from a location away from the fire building.

If you have additional fire safety questions, contact your local fire department, police department or EMS provider at their non-emergency phone number.

The Utah State Fire Marshal’s Office strongly recommends safety first in all aspects of your life.