



# Smoke Alarm

## Installation & Maintenance Tips

### Where do I install smoke alarms?

- Install smoke alarms on every level of the home, including the basement, making sure that there is an alarm outside every separate sleeping area.
- In addition to installing alarms on every level and outside the sleeping areas, it's a good idea to install smoke alarms in all bedrooms.
- For manufactured (mobile) homes, install a smoke alarm outside of each sleeping area and inside of each bedroom.
- If someone in the home is deaf or hard of hearing, consider installing an alarm that combines flashing lights, vibration and/or sound.
- Mount smoke alarms high on walls or ceilings (remember, smoke rises). Ceiling mounted alarms should be installed at least four inches away from the nearest wall; wall-mounted alarms should be installed four to 12 inches away from the ceiling.
- If you have ceilings that are pitched, install the alarm near the ceiling's highest point.
- Don't install smoke alarms near windows, doors, or ducts where drafts might interfere with their operation.
- Smoke alarms should not be installed in kitchens, bathrooms or garages.

### How do I maintain my smoke alarms?

- Test your smoke alarms once a month, following the manufacturer's instructions.
- Replace the batteries in your smoke alarm once a year, or as soon as the alarm "chirps" warning that the battery is low. Hint: schedule battery replacement for the same day you change your clocks from daylight saving time to standard time in the fall.
- Consider installing smoke alarms with "long-life (10-year) batteries.
- Never "borrow" a battery from a smoke alarm, Smoke alarms can't warn you of fire if their batteries are missing or have been disconnected.
- Smoke alarms don't last forever. Replace yours once every 10 years. If you can't remember how old the alarm is, then it's probably time for a new one.
- Don't disable smoke alarms even temporarily. If your smoke alarm is sounding "nuisance alarms," try relocating it farther from the kitchen or bathroom, where cooking fumes or steam can cause the alarm to sound.
- Regularly vacuuming or dusting your smoke alarms, following the manufacturer's instructions, can keep them working properly.
- Plan regular fire drills to ensure that everyone knows exactly what to do when the smoke alarm sounds. Hold a drill at night to make sure that sleeping family members awaken at the sound of the alarm. Some studies have shown that some children may not awaken to the sound of the smoke alarm. Know what your child will do before a fire occurs.
- Once the alarm sounds, you may have as few as two minutes to escape.