



MAFES Dawg Tracks

November, 2013



Safety Tips: Smoke Alarm Safety

Every home should be equipped with smoke alarms. Proper installment and maintenance plays a vital role in reducing the potential for loss of life and property with them in your home or business.

The following statement isn't a "scare tactic," but with smoke alarms in the home or business, your chances of dying from reported fire-related circumstances are cut in half.

- ✓ 96% of all homes have at least one smoke alarm - according to a 2010 telephone survey.
- ✓ Overall, 3/4 of all U.S. homes have at least one smoke alarm.
- ✓ Approximately 66% of home fire deaths in 2005-2009 resulted from home fires in homes with no smoke alarms or no working alarms.
- ✓ When smoke alarms fail to work the reasons are batteries are missing or they are dead. Almost 25% of smoke alarm failures were due to dead batteries.
- ✓ **A properly installed and maintained smoke alarm is the only thing in your home that can alert you and your family to a fire 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Whether you are awake or asleep, a working smoke alarm is constantly on alert, scanning the air for fire and smoke.**

TYPES OF SMOKE ALARMS-

There are many brands of smoke alarms available on the market today. However, there are only two basic types: Ionization and Photoelectric. It can't be stated that one is any better than the other in every fire situation in a home. Both Ionization and Photoelectric are better at detecting distinctly different, yet potentially fatal fires. Also, you can't predict which type of fire might occur in your home. **The United States Fire Administration (USFA) recommends that every residence and place where people sleep be equipped with:**

- **Both Ionization and Photoelectric smoke alarms, OR**
- **Dual sensor smoke alarms, which contain both Ionization and Photoelectric sensors.**

SMOKE ALARM POWER-

Smoke alarms are powered by:

- **Battery** – A disposable 9-volt or a non-replaceable 10-year lithium (long-life) battery are used in some models.
- **Electric** – Smoke alarms can be hard-wired into your home electric service. A back-up battery is usually present on hard-wired systems and will need to be replaced.
- Ionization and Photoelectric alarms cost usually between \$6 and \$20. Dual sensor smoke alarms cost between \$24 and \$40. Either system is worth the investment when you consider the savings and family safety that they create.
- Some fire departments offer them at reduced prices or some even furnish them free of any charge. Contact your local fire department to inquire if they offer either of these considerations.

INSTALLATION LOCATIONS IN THE HOME-

- Install smoke alarms on every level of your home, including the basement.
- The USFA recommends installing them outside and inside the bedrooms.
- Smoke and deadly gases rise, so installing the alarms at the proper level will provide you with the earliest warning possible.
- The NFPA recommends mounting them high on the walls and ceilings. **Always follow the manufacturer's instructions so that you can refer to them for testing and maintenance.**

SMOKE ALARM MAINTENANCE-

- "Beating a dead horse" – Proper installation and maintenance is critical for adequate operation.
- Again follow the manufacturer's installation instructions.
- Smoke alarms powered by 9-volt batteries:
 - ~ Test the alarm monthly by pushing the test button.
 - ~ Replace the batteries at least once each year. (We change ours when the time changes – twice each year).
- You should replace each unit completely every 8-10 years.
- Smoke alarms powered by a 10-year lithium (long-life) battery:
 - ~ Test them monthly by pushing the test button
- Smoke alarms hard-wired in to the home electric service:
 - ~ Test them monthly by pushing the test button
 - ~ Change the back-up battery at least once each year.
 - ~ Replace the entire system every 8-10 years.
- Be sure that the smoke alarms are labeled with a recognized testing laboratory.
- Hard-wired smoke alarms should be installed by a certified electrician.
- If cooking fumes or steam sets off nuisance alarms, replace it with a unit that has a "hush" button. A "hush" button will reduce the alarm's sensitivity for a short period of time.
- Ionization alarms or an alarm with a "hush" should be used within 20 feet of a cooking appliance.
- Certain models of smoke alarms include a recordable voice announcement in addition to usual sound alarm, which is good for awaking small children.
- There are alarms available for folks who are deaf or hard of hearing. They use strobe lights. Vibration devices can also be added to the alarms.
- Smoke alarms that include a recordable voice announcement in addition to the usual alarm sound may be helpful in waking children through the use of a familiar voice.
- Smoke alarms are very important when you are preparing a home fire escape plan.
- Do not install fire alarms close to windows, doors, or AC ducts. The wind drafts can interfere with their operation.

K.I.S.S.
KEEP IT SAFE & SOUND
SAFETY IS EVERYONE ONE'S
RESPONSIBILITY!!