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Smoke Alarms Save Lives.



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U.S. Fire Administration Mission Statement

We provide national leadership to foster a solid foundation for local fire and emergency services for prevention, preparedness and response.



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Did You Know...

- A residential structure fire occurs **every 79 seconds**.
- **More than 3,000 people die in home fires each year** in the U.S. Most of these fires occurred in homes without a working smoke alarm.
- From 2003 to 2006, almost two-thirds of home fire deaths resulted from fires in homes with **no smoke alarms or no working smoke alarms**.
- The risk of dying in a fire is **reduced by 82 percent** in homes equipped with working smoke alarms and automatic fire sprinklers, when compared to homes without either.



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Why Should I Have a Working Smoke Alarm?

- A properly maintained smoke alarm is the only thing in your home that can alert you and your family to a fire 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- Whether you're awake or asleep, a working smoke alarm is on alert, constantly scanning the air.
- A smoke alarm that isn't working because of age or because it has batteries that are dead or missing is just like not having a smoke alarm at all.



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**Real stories of people who were saved because they
had working smoke alarms**

Smoke Alarms Save Lives...like Bianca's

Bianca Sancic says “the best dollar I ever spent” was on a battery for her smoke alarm that she replaced after being urged to do so by a local firefighter. One week later she had a home fire, was awakened by her working smoke alarm, and escaped safely.

“The house was a total loss, but I was alive, simply because [he] told me to change the battery in my smoke alarm. I now check my alarms every month and change the batteries every six months. I also practice fire drills in my home.”

***Bianca Sancic
Charleston, SC***



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What Types of Smoke Alarms are Available?

- There are two basic types of smoke alarms:
 - Ionization, and
 - Photoelectric
- The USFA recommends you have:
 - a) **both** ionization **AND** photoelectric smoke alarms, **OR**
 - b) **dual sensor** smoke alarms, which contain both ionization and photoelectric sensors.



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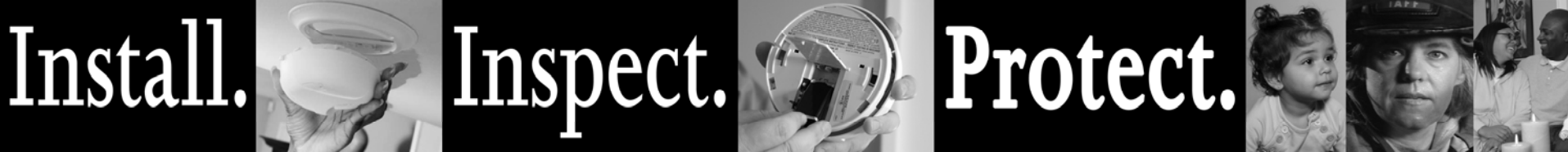
What type of smoke alarms are available for people with hearing disabilities?

- There are also smoke alarms available for people with hearing disabilities. These alarms may strobe and/or vibrate to alert people to a possible fire.



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What Powers a Smoke Alarm?

- Smoke alarms are powered by battery, or they are hardwired into the home's electrical system.
- If the smoke alarm is powered by battery, it runs on either:
 - a) a disposable 9-volt battery or
 - b) a non-replaceable 10-year lithium "long-life" battery.
- If the smoke alarm is hardwired, a backup battery is usually present and may need to be replaced yearly.



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Where and How Do I Install Smoke Alarms?

- On every level of your home, including the basement.
- Both inside and outside of sleeping areas.
- Follow the manufacturer's installation instructions.
- Hardwired smoke alarms should be installed by a qualified electrician.

Some fire departments will install battery-operated smoke alarms in your home at no cost. Contact your local fire department's non-emergency phone number for more information.



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How Do I Maintain My Smoke Alarms?

Smoke Alarm Powered by a 9-volt battery

- Test monthly.
- Replace battery at least once per year.
- Replace entire unit every 8-10 years.

Smoke Alarm Powered by a 10-year lithium (“long life”) battery

- Test monthly.
- Since you cannot (and should not) replace the lithium battery, the entire smoke alarm unit should be replaced according to manufacturer’s instructions.



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How Do I Maintain My Smoke Alarms?

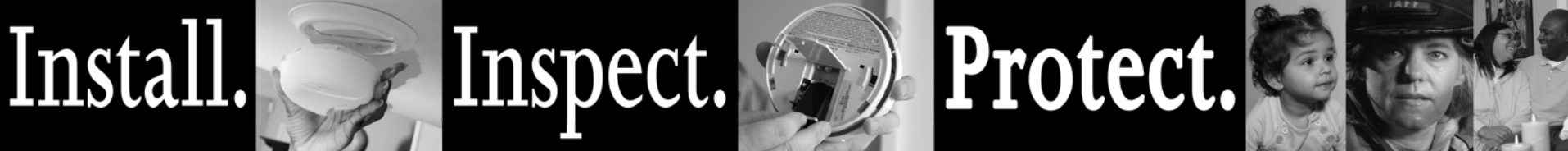
Smoke Alarm that is Hardwired into the Home's Electrical System

- Test monthly.
- Replace backup battery at least once per year.
- Replace entire unit every 8-10 years.



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Never Disable a Smoke Alarm While Cooking!

It can be a deadly mistake.

If a smoke alarm sounds while you're cooking or taking a shower with lots of steam, **do not** remove the battery.

You should:

- Open a window or door and press the “hush” button,
- Wave a towel at the alarm to clear the air, or
- Move the entire alarm to another location.



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Residential Fire Sprinkler Systems

While smoke alarms can alert resident to a home fire, they cannot extinguish the fire. Sprinkler systems can!

The benefits?

- Safer for the fire service
- Extremely reliable
- Limit damage caused by fire and/or firefighting hose lines
- Costs less than approximately \$2 /sq. ft. to install
- Can lower insurance rates by 5-15%



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Escape Planning

- Prepare and practice escape routes with the entire family, including children, monthly.
- Know two ways out of every room in your home.
- Crawl low, under smoke.
- Feel closed doors. If hot, use another exit.
- Identify a place to meet household members outside.
- Call 9-1-1 or the local emergency number *after* you escape.
- **Never** go back inside a burning home.



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Fire Safety Walkthrough

- Keep clothes, blankets, curtains, towels and other items at least three feet from space heaters, and away from stove burners.
- Place space heaters where they will not tip over easily.
- Have chimneys cleaned and inspected annually by a professional.
- Clear away trash, flammables and decorative materials.
- Always use a metal mesh screen with fireplaces and leave glass doors open while burning a fire.
- Never leave cooking unattended.



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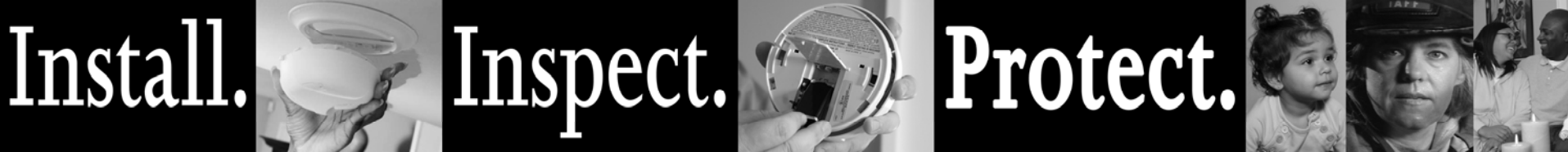
Fire Safety Walkthrough

- Be sure your stove and small appliances are off before going to bed.
- Check for worn wires and do not run cords under rugs or furniture.
- Never overload electrical sockets.
- Keep lighters and matches out of the reach of children.
- Never leave cigarettes unattended and never smoke in bed.
- Make sure cigarettes and ashes are out. The cigarette needs to be completely stubbed out in the ashtray or run under water.



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Smoke Alarms Save Lives...like Rachel's

“I was awakened by the sound of a beeping noise. As I came to my senses, I smelled the smoke and knew right away it [was the] smoke alarm and our house was on fire. We lost everything that evening, including our cats... If our alarm in the basement and main floor hadn't gone off, I feel by the time the smoke had reached the upstairs alarm, we wouldn't have been able to get out.”

***Rachel Picek
La Grange, IL***



Photo of Rachel's hallway after the fire

Install.



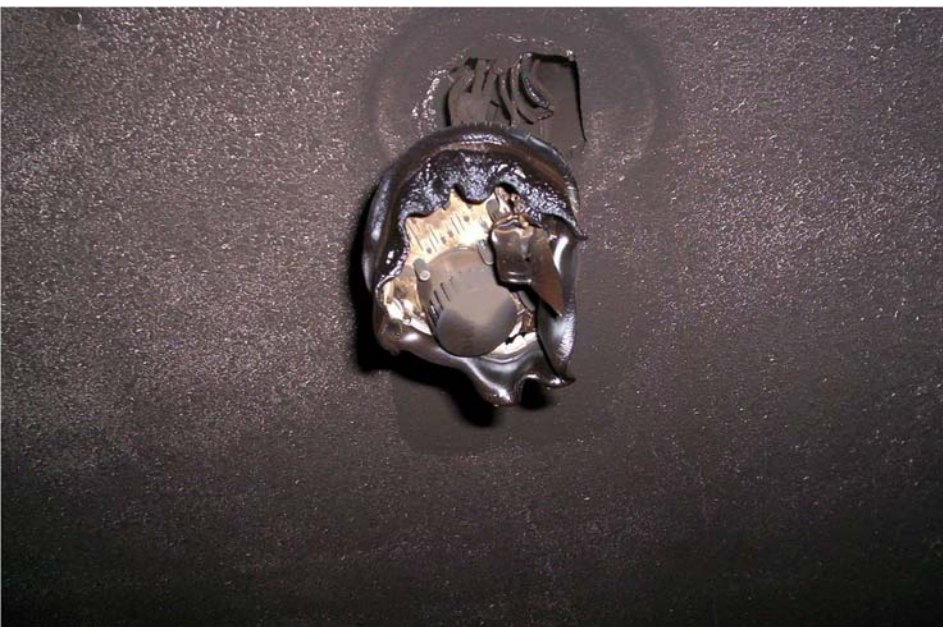
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Smoke Alarms Save Lives...like Abby's



Abby's burned smoke alarm that saved her life

“In the early morning my boyfriend, Niles, and I woke up to smoke alarms going off. Our initial thought was that the beeping was the cause of a dying battery, but we quickly discovered that there was a fire. Niles opened the windows in my bedroom and I dialed 9-1-1. He leapt first onto the porch a floor below and then stood to catch me...”



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Smoke Alarms Save Lives...like Abby's



Abby's living room after the fire

“Firemen came and put the fire out in about 30 minutes. I know in my heart that if it were not for the working smoke alarms in my apartment, I would not have woken up that morning.”

***Abby Knapps
Kalamazoo, MI***



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For more information:

**www.usfa.dhs.gov/smokealarms
(English)**

**www.usfa.dhs.gov/detectoresdehumo
(Spanish)**

**USFA Publications Center
(Toll-Free) 1-(800)561-3356**



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