



## **Home Smoke Alarms**

### **Smoke Alarms Save Lives [\(Smoke Alarm Legislation has changed - click to find out more\)](#)**

The majority of fatal home fires happen at night, when people are asleep. Contrary to popular belief, the smell of smoke may not wake a sleeping person. The poisonous gases and smoke produced by a fire can numb the senses and put you into a deeper sleep.

Inexpensive household smoke alarms sound an alarm, alerting you to a fire. By giving you time to escape, smoke alarms cut your risk of dying in a home fire nearly in half.



[Find Out About Our Smoke Alarm Distribution Program](#)

### **Choosing an Alarm**

Be sure the smoke alarms you buy carry the label of an independent testing laboratory such as ULC or CSA.

Several types of alarms are available. Some run on batteries, others on household electric current. Some detect smoke using an "ionization" sensor, others use a "photoelectric" detection system. All approved smoke alarms, regardless of the type, will offer adequate protection provided they are installed and maintained properly.

### **Is One Enough?**

Every home should have a smoke alarm outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home, including the basement. On floors without bedrooms, alarms should be installed in or near living areas, such as dens, living rooms, or family rooms. Read about new [Smoke Alarm Legislation](#).

Be sure everyone sleeping in your home can hear your smoke alarms. If any residents are hearing-impaired or sleep with bedroom door closed, install additional alarms inside sleeping areas as well. There are special smoke alarms for the hearing impaired that flash a light in addition to sounding an audible alarm.

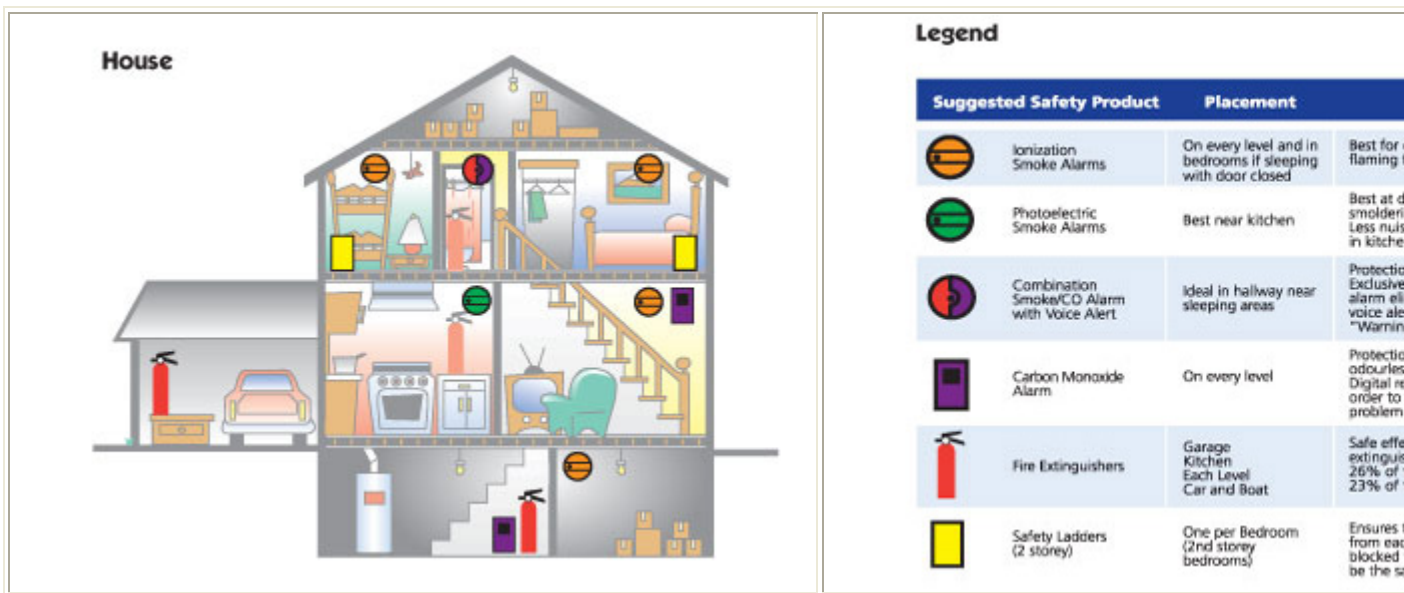
For extra protection, fire departments suggest installing alarms in dining rooms, furnace rooms, utility rooms and hallways. Smoke alarms are not recommended for kitchens, bathrooms or garages - where cooking fumes, steam or exhaust fumes could set off false alarms.

## Where to Install

Because smoke rises, mount alarms high on a wall or on the ceiling, depending on the manufacturer's instructions.

In stairways with no doors at the top or bottom, position smoke alarms anywhere in the path of smoke moving up the stairs. But always position smoke alarms at the bottom of closed stairways, such as those leading to the basement, because dead air trapped near the door at the top of a stairway could prevent smoke from reaching an alarm located at the top.

Do not install a smoke alarm too near a window, door, or forced-air register where drafts could interfere with the alarm's operation. For the best results, follow the printed instructions that come with the smoke alarm.



## Installation

Most battery-powered smoke alarms and alarms that plug into wall outlets can be installed using only a drill and a screwdriver by following the manufacturer's instructions. Plug-in alarms must have restraining devices so they cannot be unplugged by accident. Alarms can also be hard-wired into a building's electrical system. Hard-wired alarms should be installed by a qualified electrician. Never connect a smoke alarm to a circuit that can be turned off by a wall switch.

## False Alarms

Cooking vapours and steam sometimes set off a smoke alarm. To correct this, try moving the alarm away from the kitchen or bathroom or install an exhaust fan. Cleaning your alarm regularly, according to the manufacturer's instructions, may also help. There are also alarms available that have hush buttons that will silence them for a short period of time as cooking or a shower takes place.

If "nuisance alarms" persist, do not disable the alarm. Replace it!

## **Maintenance**

- Only a functioning smoke alarm can protect you.
- Never disable an alarm by borrowing its battery for another use.
- Following the manufacturer's instructions, test all your smoke alarms monthly and install new batteries at least once a year. A good reminder is when you change your clocks in the spring or fall: change your clock, change your battery.
- Clean your smoke alarms using a vacuum cleaner without removing the alarm's cover.
- Never paint a smoke alarm.
- Smoke alarms do not last forever. Replace any smoke alarm that is more than 10 years old.

## **Plan and Practise**

- Make sure everyone is familiar with the sound of the alarm.
- Plan escape routes. Know at least two ways out of each room. Agree on a meeting place outside your home where all residents will gather after they escape. Practise your escape plan at least twice a year.
- Remove obstructions from doors and windows needed for escape.
- Make sure everyone in the household can unlock doors and windows quickly, even in the dark. Windows or doors with security bars should be equipped with quick-release devices and everyone in the household should know how to use them.
- When an alarm sounds, leave immediately. Go directly to your outside meeting place and call the fire department.
- Once you're out, stay out. Never return to a burning building.