

# SMOKE ALARMS



## Smoke alarms are your best defense!

### Smoke alarms are an important part of a home fire escape plan.

- Smoke alarms should be installed in every bedroom. They should also be outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home, including the basement.
- Components of the alarms will deteriorate over time and can only be expected to work effectively within 10 years of their date of manufacture. **Replace all smoke alarms that are older than 10 years.**
- It is best to use interconnected smoke alarms. When one smoke alarm sounds, they all sound.
- Hard-wired smoke alarms should have battery back-up in case there is a power outage.
- Alarms that are hard-wired (and include battery backup) must be installed by a qualified electrician.
- Battery powered smoke alarms should be changed twice a year. A 10-year sealed battery is preferred.

Nationally, half of home fires happen when people are sleeping. In New Hampshire, most fatal fires take place between 11pm and 7am.

There are a couple of different types of smoke alarms.

**Ionization** – generally more responsive to flaming fires

**Photoelectric** – generally more responsive to smoldering fires

For the best protection, both types of alarms, or a combination should be installed in homes. Call your local fire department with specific questions.

If you live in a rental unit, the owner of the rental unit shall be responsible for maintaining the automatic fire warning device and carbon monoxide detection device in a suitable condition.\*

### Safety Tips.

- Test alarms monthly by pushing the test button.
- Smoke rises; install smoke alarms on a ceiling or high on a wall, following manufacturer's instructions.
- If an alarm "chirps," this is a warning that the battery is low and you should replace the battery right away.
- Be sure the smoke alarm has the label of a recognized testing laboratory such as Underwriters Laboratory (UL). <https://ul.org>
- If a smoke alarm does not respond properly when tested, replace the smoke alarm.
- If cooking fumes or steam set off nuisance alarms, replace the alarm with an alarm that has a "hush" button. A "hush" button will reduce the alarm's sensitivity for a short period of time. Photoelectric alarms tend to have fewer nuisance notifications.
- An ionization alarm with a hush button or a photoelectric alarm should be used if the alarm is within 20 feet of a cooking appliance.
- Smoke alarms that include a recorded voice announcement, in addition to the usual alarm sound, may be helpful in waking children through the use of a familiar voice.
- Special smoke alarms are available for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. These alarms use strobe lights. Vibration equipment can be added to these alarms.

## Smoke alarms save lives!

**Have smoke alarms in your home. If you do have an issue, these alarms will alert you and give you time to get out safely.**

\*NH RSA 153:10-a Automatic Fire Warning Devices and Carbon Monoxide Detection Devices in Dwellings

