

Smoke Detectors Save Lives



The latest report from the National Fire Protection Association indicated that 74% of reported home fire deaths result from in homes with no smoke alarms or no working smoke alarms. In half of the reported fires where there were no working smoke detectors, batteries were missing or disconnected, and batteries were dead in 15% of these incidents.

Some people say “I don’t need a smoke detector, if there is a fire I will wake up when I smell the smoke.” WRONG...when you go to sleep your sense of smell goes to sleep with you unless the smoke is very acrid and irritates your nostrils as you breathe, you may not wake up at all.

Smoke created by fire creates carbon monoxide. This deadly gas is odorless and tasteless. You won’t see or taste it. Most fire deaths occur at night when we are asleep. Death occurs from inhaling smoke or poisonous gas, not flames. A working smoke detector can alert you when there is a fire...in time to save your life. Remember that it only sounds the warning, it is also important to develop *and* practice an escape plan to be sure all the members of your household are prepared in case of an emergency.

Free Smoke Detector Program

The South Elgin Fire District along with KiDDIE and Batteries Plus have partnered together to offer a program where residents can obtain free 10 year battery smoke detectors. Residents are encouraged to set up an appointment for a free home fire safety review and to have smoke detectors installed by firefighters by calling either Fire Inspector Dave Carlson @ 847-531-8641(dcarlson@southelginfire.com) or Firefighter/Paramedic Rich Stumbaugh @ 847-741-2141 (rstumbaugh@southelginfire.com).

??? Frequently asked questions???

How many smoke detectors should I have?

Your home should have at least one smoke detector in every bedroom and one outside the hallway. You should also install one detector on each level of the home if you have a second floor or basement.

What is the proper location for a smoke detector?

Generally, the best location to mount your detector is on the ceiling at least 4 inches out from the wall. If you must install them on the wall install them at least 4 inches down from the ceiling,

but no lower than 12 inches from the ceiling. Keep them high because smoke rises. Put smoke detectors at the top of each stairwell and at the end of each long hallway. Remember not to put them any closer than 3 feet of an air supply register that might recirculate smoke resulting in a delayed alarm. Be sure to keep them away from fireplaces and wood stoves to avoid false alarms.

How do I know my detector works?

Testing is the only way to ensure your detector is working. Test the detector by holding down the test button for a few seconds and listen for the alarm. Make sure to test your detector monthly to ensure they are working properly. A working detector greatly reduces your chances of dying in a home fire.

What about maintenance?

Keeping smoke detectors in good condition is easy. Change the battery (if equipped) at least twice a year or sooner if it indicates a low battery. Clean the face to remove dust and test it weekly to ensure operation. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions.

How do I test it?

Push the test button or test it with smoke. If you test it with smoke use a match or candle. Blow out the flame and let the smoke drift up into the detector. NEVER test the smoke detector with a flame!

What is that chirping noise?

That noise, usually every 60 seconds, is a sign that the battery is going low. This signal warns you to change the battery as soon as possible. The signal might last a few days but once the battery dies, you will have no protection.

Please contact the South Elgin Fire District Fire Prevention Bureau for further information of this program or with any questions / concerns about fire safety.