

# Smoke Alarms

## Fire deaths – no smoke alarms or no working smoke alarms

Working smoke alarms save lives and should be installed and maintained in every home. Roughly two-thirds of home fire deaths result from fires in homes with no smoke alarms at all or no smoke alarms that work.



## Installation

- Utah law requires smoke alarms be installed outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home, including the basement. Larger homes may require additional smoke alarms to provide a minimum level of protection.
- For better protection, install smoke alarms in every sleeping room, outside each separate sleeping area, and on every level of the home.
- For the best protection, interconnect all smoke alarms throughout the home. When one sounds, they all sound. Wireless battery-operated interconnected smoke alarms are now available.
- An ionization smoke alarm is generally more responsive to flaming fires and a photoelectric smoke alarm is generally more responsive to smoldering fires. For the best protection or where extra time is needed to awaken or assist others, both types of alarms or combination ionization and photoelectric alarms are recommended.
- Choose a smoke alarm that has the label of a recognized testing laboratory.
- Smoke alarms should be installed away from the kitchen to prevent false alarms. Generally, they should not be closer than 10 feet to a cooking appliance.

## Testing

- Test smoke alarms at least once a month using the test button.
- Make sure everyone in your home knows the sound of the smoke alarm.

## Deaf or hard of hearing

- Smoke alarms are available for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. These alarms use strobe lights to wake the person. Vibration equipment (pillow or bed shakers) can be added to these alarms.

## Older Adults

- Recent research has shown that as people age, their ability to hear high-pitched sounds decreases. A smoke alarm with a “swoop” noise that changes pitch or use of a smoke alarm accessory now available that has a low pitched sound that is more effective for all age groups is recommended.

## Voice alarms

- Smoke alarms that include a recordable voice announcement in addition to the usual alarm sound may be helpful in waking children with the use of a familiar voice.

## Battery replacement

- Smoke alarms with non-replaceable batteries are designed to remain effective for 10 years. If the alarm chirps, warning that the battery is low, replace the entire smoke alarm right away. For smoke alarms with any other type of battery, replace batteries at least once a year. If that alarm chirps, replace only the battery.

## Smoke alarm replacement

- Replace all smoke alarms when they are 10 years old or sooner if they do not respond properly when tested.