



Smoke Detectors



Richmond Fire Prevention
646-6640

Smoke alarms are the most important safety features of your home. Properly installed, working smoke alarms will give you the early warning you need to safely escape from a fire.



Choosing an Alarm

- Be sure that smoke alarms carry the label of an independent testing lab such as Underwriter's Laboratories (UL) or Factory Mutual (FM).
- Smoke alarms can run on batteries, on household current or a combination.
- Smoke alarms have different sensor technologies:
 - Ionization Smoke Alarms- More effective against fast-flaming fires- fire which consume materials rapidly and spread quickly. Sources of these fires may be paper fires or kitchen fires.
 - Photoelectric Smoke Alarms- More effective against slow smoldering fires (fires which smolder for hours before bursting into flame.) Sources of these fires include cigarettes burning in couches or bedding.
 - Combo Units- Ionization/Photoelectric are available and provide early warning of both types of fires.

Where To Install Alarms

- Smoke alarms should be installed on every level of your home, including the basement and in/near every sleeping area. Ensure that all members of your family can hear it.
- Mount alarms high on a wall or on top of the ceiling. Position wall-mounted alarms with the top of the alarm 4-12 inches (10-30 centimeter) from the ceiling.
- Position ceiling-mounted alarms at least 4 inches (10 centimeters) away from the nearest wall.
- Don't install smoke alarms near a window, door, or forced-air register where drafts could interfere with its operation. The moving air can blow smoke away from the alarm's sensor.
- To avoid false alarms, keep smoke alarms at least ten feet from stoves and steamy showers.

How To Install Alarms

- Follow the manufacturer's instructions or call the fire department for assistance.
- Hard-wire alarms need to be installed by a qualified electrician.
- Never connect a smoke alarm to a circuit that can be turned off from a wall switch.

Maintenance Tips

- Test smoke alarms once a month by pushing the "test button."
- Install new batteries at least once a year.
- Clean smoke alarms using a vacuum cleaner or blow across the face of the detector to remove dust.
- Replace each smoke alarm every 10 years.

Alarms for the Hearing Impaired

- Smoke alarms for the hearing impaired are available. They have a built in strobe light or a vibrating piece that can be placed in a pocket or on the bed.

The sensors and installation are the same as mentioned above