



Smoke alarms that are properly installed and maintained play a vital role in reducing fire deaths and injuries. Having a working smoke alarm cuts the chances of dying in a reported fire in half.

- A 2008 survey found that 96% of U.S. households had at least one smoke alarm, yet in 2003-2006, no smoke alarms were present or none operated in two out of the five (41%) of the reported home fires.
- Almost two-thirds of reported home fire deaths in 2003-2006 resulted from fires in homes with no smoke alarms or no working smoke alarms.
- When smoke alarms fail to operate, it is usually because batteries are missing, disconnected or dead.

## **INSTALLATION AND MAINTENANCE TIPS**

- Install smoke alarms on every level of your home, including the basement, making sure that there is an alarm outside every separate sleeping area. New homes are required to have a smoke alarm in every sleeping room and all smoke alarms must be interconnected.
- Hard-wired smoke alarms operate on your household electrical current. They can be interconnected so that every alarm sounds regardless of the fire's location. This is an advantage

in early warning, because it gives occupants extra time to escape if they are in one part of the home and a fire breaks out in another part. Alarms that are hard-wired should have battery backups in case of a power outage, and should be installed by a qualified electrician.

- If you sleep with bedroom doors closed, have a qualified electrician install interconnected smoke alarms in each room so that when one alarm sounds, they all sound.

- If you, or someone in your home is [deaf or hard of hearing](#) , consider installing an alarm that combines flashing lights, vibration and/or sound.

- Mount smoke alarms high on walls or ceilings (remember, smoke rises). Ceiling mounted alarms should be installed at least four inches away from the nearest wall; wall-mounted alarms should be installed four to 12 inches away from the ceiling.

- If you have ceilings that are pitched, install the alarm near the ceiling's highest point.

- Don't install smoke alarms near windows, doors, or ducts where drafts might interfere with their operation.

- Never paint smoke alarms. Paint, stickers, or other decorations could keep the alarms from working.

Source: [National Fire Protection Association](#)