

Facts about smoke alarms

Install Smoke Alarms: It's the Law!

The Ontario Fire Code requires that every home have working smoke alarms on each storey as well as outside all sleeping areas.

1 Smoke alarms save lives

Most fatal fires occur at night when people are asleep. Often, victims never wake up. A working smoke alarm will detect smoke and sound an alarm, giving everyone precious time to escape.

2 Buying the right alarm

There are several types of smoke alarms with different features and applications. Alarms can be electrically connected, battery powered or a combination of both. Many alarms have a pause feature, which temporarily silences the alarm. For information about the best type of alarm for your home, contact your fire department.

3 Where to install smoke alarms

Smoke alarms must be installed on each storey of the home as well as outside sleeping areas. Because smoke rises, alarms should be installed on the ceiling. If this is not possible, place them high up on a wall, according to manufacturer's instructions. Avoid placing alarms near bathrooms, heating appliances, windows, or close to ceiling fans.

4 Test smoke alarms monthly

Every month, test your smoke alarms, using the alarm test button.



Install alarms on every storey



Test smoke alarms monthly



Heed the advice and save lives

5 Change the batteries once a year

If the low battery warning sounds, replace the battery immediately. Install a new battery of the proper type once a year, or as recommended by the manufacturer.

6 Gently vacuum annually

Dust can clog a smoke alarm, so carefully vacuum the inside of a battery powered unit using the soft bristle brush. If electrically connected, shut off the power and vacuum the outside vents only. Restore power and test the unit when finished.

7 Smoke alarms don't last forever

All smoke alarms do wear out, so if your alarms are more than 10 years old, replace them with new ones.

8 Plan your escape

Make sure that everyone knows the sound of the smoke alarm and what to do when it activates. Create an escape plan and practice it with the entire household. Once outside, call the fire department from a neighbour's home. Never re-enter a burning building.