

Smoke Detectors

- Smoke detectors save lives.
- The majority of fatal home fires happen at night.
- The smell of smoke may not wake you up.
- You should have one smoke detector on every level, and one outside any sleeping area.
- Ceiling units should be placed at least four inches from any wall. Always place on the highest part of the ceiling.
- Wall mounted units should be placed four to twelve inches from the ceiling.
- If your smoke detector goes off due to cooking or steam from a shower try moving the detector a short distance.
- Replace smoke detectors over ten years old.
- Test your smoke alarm monthly.
- Change your batteries when you change your clock.

Children and Smoke Detectors

Children are more vulnerable to fire than are adults. An average of three children a day die in home fires.

Recent studies indicate that children may not wake to the sound of a smoke detector at night. A recent study conducted by the US Navy finds that children under the age of thirteen experience a very deep sleep pattern. It is when the children are in this pattern that they may not wake to the sound of a smoke detector. During the study children were exposed to detectors sounding at 120 decibels, this is 50 % higher than the normal smoke detector. During these tests only one in twenty children awoke. It was also discovered during these tests that while a child would sleep through the sound of a detector, they would awaken at the voice of their parents.

While more tests are being conducted to determine the best course of action to awaken the children there are a few things that the family can do to try to prevent this mishap.

First practice your home evacuation plan. Sensitize your children to the sound that your smoke detector makes.

Second make sure that your children's doors are closed at night to keep smoke out of their rooms and give them adequate time to react.

Lastly, parents need to become responsible for making sure that not only are the children awake but that they are reacting to the emergency the way that they practice their home plan.