

What's the Risk?

Ensure Your Smoke Detectors Work



THE ISSUE

Evidence has proven smoke detectors save lives. According to Underwriters Laboratories and the National Fire Protection Association:

- Fire deaths have been reduced by half in North America since the introduction of smoke detectors in the late 1970s.
- Two-thirds of residential fire deaths can be attributed to a lack of working smoke detectors in homes.
- Only two out of every five homes have a smoke detector in all bedrooms.



WHAT'S THE RISK?

Only a working smoke detector can save your life. In cases of a fire fatality, fire investigators often find smoke detectors did not work. Common reasons identified for why a smoke detector stopped functioning include: the device was disconnected or batteries were removed (perhaps to avoid the nuisance of false triggers, such as burnt toast setting off the alarm), or the batteries expired. Since many fatal fires start at night, it is critical to the safety of you and your family to make sure every smoke detector in your home is operating correctly. Smoke alone won't necessarily wake you up; in fact, the fumes and gases in the smoke could put you into an even deeper sleep and often, victims never wake up.



WHAT CAN BE DONE?

Follow these steps to keep your family safe in case of fire:

- Make sure all smoke detectors are working properly and be sure follow the manufacturers instructions to check, test, and clean them. As well, replace the batteries at least twice a year.
- Install smoke detectors in each bedroom, in the hallway outside bedrooms and on each level of your home, including the basement. Be sure to follow any Provincial, Territorial or Federal Fire and Building Codes for the placement of smoke detectors.
- Test smoke detectors monthly by pushing the test button.
- Once a year, use a smoke detector tester spray to test if the unit is functioning properly. Smoke detector tester spray is available at most hardware stores in Canada and is simple and safe to use.
- If the alarm is battery-powered and doesn't sound, replace the battery and try again. If it's connected to household electrical circuits and doesn't sound, check the circuit breaker and try the unit again. In either case, if the smoke detector still isn't working, replace the entire unit. An electrician should be consulted for non-working electrical detector replacement.
- Replace any smoke detector that is more than 10 years old.
- Ensure everyone in your home recognizes the sound of the alarm and knows what to do in case of a fire. Know two ways out of every room and have a prearranged meeting place outside.

