

Meridian Fire Department

Bureau of Fire Prevention

FIRE SAFETY FACT SHEET: Smoke Alarms

EVERY 19 SECONDS, a fire department somewhere in the United States responds to a fire. Most fires do not happen in homes; but most fire deaths and injuries do. The most common causes of home fire deaths are misplaced or misused smoking materials, heating equipment, and kitchen related hazards. Accidents don't cause fires people do. Here are some things you can do to improve you and your family's chance of surviving a fire emergency.

Smoke Alarms save lives: The majority of home fires that kill people happen at night. When people are asleep. People will not always wake up when they smell smoke. In actuality smoke and fire gases can cause individuals to sleep even more deeply.

Smoke Alarms save lives Part-II: A working smoke alarm can wake someone up in enough time to escape, cutting an individual's chances of dying in a fire in half.

How many Smoke Alarms do I need? Install at least (1) smoke alarm on each floor of your home, including the basement, and outside each sleeping area. If you sleep with the doors closed install a smoke alarm inside each sleeping room.

Be sure that everyone sleeping in your home can hear your smoke alarms! If there is a person or persons in your home that are hearing impaired there are other options available such as strobe-lights and vibrating alarms. There are even alarms of a different pitch that allow the partially hearing impaired to hear the alarm when it goes off.

Where is the best place for me to install my smoke alarms? Smoke rises, so be sure to mount smoke alarms high on a wall or the ceiling if possible. Position **wall-mounted alarms 4 to 12 inches from the ceiling** and position **ceiling-mounted alarms at least 4 inches from the nearest wall**. In rooms with pitched-ceilings, mount the alarm at or near the ceiling's highest point.

Avoid mounting Smoke Alarms in or close to the kitchen, near fire places, and open heating sources to limit false and or nuisance alarms.

Battery Smoke Alarms should be tested monthly. The batteries in them should be replaced once a year; pick a day that is easy to remember like when the time changes. **Hard-wired Alarms** should also be tested monthly. Remember to keep your alarms clean; dust and debris can interfere with your alarms' proper operation.

Smoke Alarms should be replaced every 8-years. Smoke Alarms are just like any piece of electrical equipment, they wear out. Write the purchase or installation date on them so you can easily remember when it is time to replace it.