

SMOKE ALARMS –LOCATION, INSTALLATION, TESTING AND CLEANING

LOCATING/INSTALLING ALARMS

- Read and follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully.
- For best performance, an alarm should be mounted on the ceiling in or near the centre of the room, hall or stairway and at the head of each stairway leading to an occupied area.
- Optimum location for wall mounts is at least 15 cm (6 in.) down from the ceiling but not more than 30 cm (19 in.).
- Avoid locations where temperature is less than 5°C (41°F) or exceeds 48°C (119°F).
- Keep alarms away from doors and windows.
- Don't locate an alarm in front of an air register, fans or vents.
- Keep alarms at least 60 cm (two feet) from any corner of a room.
- Don't recess an alarm.
- Smoke alarms in rooms with ceiling slopes greater than 90 cm (one foot) rise per 2.4 m (eight feet) horizontally should be located at the high side of the room.
- Avoid locating an alarm in the peak of an "A" frame type ceiling.
- Never paint a smoke alarm.
- Keep alarms 60 to 90 cm (two to three feet) away from light fixtures.
- When having an alarm connected into the electrical wiring system of a house you should:
 - use a qualified electrical contractor,
 - do not install the alarm in the electrical circuit except at the main panel; Alarms must never be installed in a circuit connected to an on/off switch, and
 - check the alarm operation when the installation has been completed.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR: TESTING & CLEANING

Test your alarm monthly and clean it every 6 months. Mark it on your calendar so that you don't forget. Do it on the first day of the month, or on payday, or whatever day is best for you. Things to remember while testing your alarm:

- When testing your alarm check for two things; ensure that power is transmitted to the alarm, and that it will activate in the presence of smoke.
- Test your smoke alarm by pressing the test button.
- Even the types of alarms that have a pilot light to indicate power is being transmitted should be tested regularly.
- Older models have a test button that activates the alarm. Test these monthly with smoke as well. The test button may only tell you that the buzzer works, not that the smoke-sensing mechanism is functioning.
- Battery-operated smoke alarms will make a chirping sound to let you know when batteries need replacing. Generally, batteries need yearly replacement.
- When you've been away from home for a few days, check your alarm on your return to make sure it is working properly.
- Remember, your smoke alarm can't protect you if the batteries have been removed or a plug has been disconnected.
- The lifespan of the typical smoke alarms is about 10 years. Replace non-working smoke alarms with new units immediately. However, some models will last as little as five years.
- To clean the alarm, open the cover and gently vacuum the interior of the alarm. Frequently, the alarm will sound while the unit is being cleaned.
- If the smoke alarm is battery operated - replace the battery when it's low - don't just remove it. A smoke alarm with no battery is powerless to save your life.