

# Smoke Alarms



## Horry County Fire Rescue

## Community Safety Guideline

### What Are the Different Types of Smoke Alarms?

- **Ionization Alarms** – These types of smoke alarms sound in a quicker time-frame during a fast and flaming fire.
- **Photo-Electric Alarms** – These types of smoke alarms sound in a quicker time-frame during a smoky and smoldering fire.

### What Are the Different Types of Power Sources?

- **9 Volt Battery Power** – These smoke alarm batteries must be replaced at least every year, and the entire smoke detector should be replaced every 10 years.
- **Lithium Battery Power** – Long-lasting lithium batteries do not have to be replaced. The manufacturer suggests replacing the entire smoke alarm every 10 years.
- **House Current Power** – Smoke detectors that are wired into the home may have a battery back-up. If so, the 9-volt back-up battery should be replaced at least yearly. If the back-up battery is lithium powered, it will not need to be replaced. Smoke detector manufacturers suggest you replace these smoke alarms every 10 years.



### Five Quick Tips

1. Smoke alarms should be installed on every level of your home, as well as inside of all sleeping areas.
2. You should test your smoke alarm each month.
3. You should lightly dust or vacuum your smoke alarm after each test.
4. Smoke alarm should be completely replaced every 10 years.
5. Your family should plan and practice a home escape plan during your monthly smoke alarm testing routine.

### How to Maintain Your Smoke Alarm

- You should test your smoke alarm once a month with the test button and every six months with smoke from a blown-out candle.
- You should remove the cover and gently vacuum or dust your smoke alarm at least once a month.
- Standard 9-volt battery powered detectors should have the battery replaced each year; do this when you change your clock in the fall.
- Lithium battery powered smoke alarms do not need new batteries each year; instead, replace the entire detector every 10 years.
- Never paint over any portion of your smoke alarm.
- If your smoke alarm activates due to a fire in your home, the smoke alarm should be replaced.

### Where to Install Your Smoke Alarm

- There should be a smoke detector on every level of your home.
- You install a smoke alarm in each bedroom.
- You should not install smoke alarms near fireplaces, wood stoves, or in the kitchen; they tend to false alarm more frequently in those areas.
- Install smoke alarms at least three feet away from any air return or air vent.
- If you have to install your smoke alarm on a wall, it should be placed at least 12 inches below the ceiling.

**We suggest you  
Test and Dust your  
Smoke Alarm  
each month**

**“Smoke Alarms and Exit Drills in the Home...A Plan You Can Live With”**