

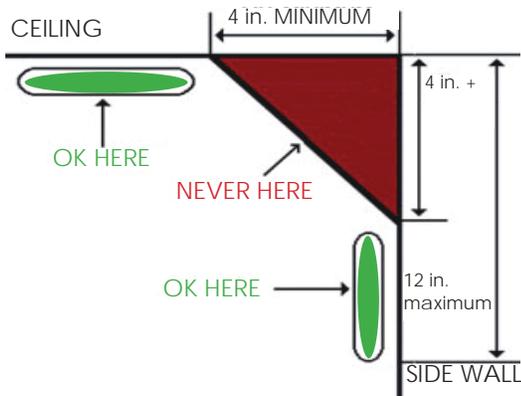
# Where Should I Put My Smoke Alarms?

You should have smoke alarms:

- 1 Inside EACH bedroom and sleeping area.
- 2 Just outside of EACH bedroom and sleeping area (such as the hallway, landing, or adjacent living space).
- 3 On EVERY level of your home. (On levels without bedrooms, install alarms in the living room/den and near the stairway to the upper level.)

## Location on the Wall or Ceiling

Remember that smoke rises! Mount the smoke alarm high on the wall or ceiling, at least 4 inches but no more than 12 inches away from the ceiling (to the top of the alarm), as shown:



Smoke alarms should be installed at least 10 feet, ideally 20 feet, from a cooking appliance to minimize false alarms when cooking.

Don't install alarms near windows, doors, or ducts where drafts might interfere with their operation.

If you have ceilings that are pitched, install the alarm within 3 feet of the peak but not within the apex of the peak (4 inches down from the peak).

# Working Smoke Alarms Save Lives!

Working smoke alarms more than double your chance of getting safely out of a fire at home!



You probably only have about 2 minutes to escape a fire in your house, so your smoke alarm is crucial to alerting your family in time to get out. But it's not enough to have smoke alarms ... you've got to TEST and REPLACE them regularly to ensure they'll work when your life depends on it.

## Every Second Counts.

- 🔥 Three out of five fire deaths happen in homes where the smoke alarms did not work, or there were not enough alarms.
- 🔥 When smoke alarms don't work, it is usually because the batteries are missing, disconnected or dead. It can also be because the alarm itself was more than 10 years old and should've been replaced; smoke alarms are not designed to last over 10 years, even if they are hard-wired/interconnected.
- 🔥 Over half of home fire deaths happen at night when most people are asleep. Many of these start in the bedroom. It's crucial to have working smoke alarms in every bedroom and every sleeping area.
- 🔥 Only a third of Americans have practiced a home fire escape plan. (Many people have a fire escape plan in theory, but they have never actually practiced it.)

SOURCE: National Fire Protection Assoc. (NFPA)



Travis County Emergency Services District (ESD) No. 2

Pflugerville Fire Department

# Living Safe and Well SMOKE ALARMS



Serving the Community Since 1955

*Because We Care*

203 E. Pecan St, Pflugerville Texas 78660  
(512) 251-2801  
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# How Should I Take Care of My Smoke Alarms?

## 1. Test Your Alarms Every Month.

Hold the test button for several seconds (up to 20) until you hear a long, loud beep to indicate the alarm is working. This can usually be easily done with a pencil, broom handle, or your finger, but if you have high ceilings it may require a ladder. It's a good idea to do it as a family with your children's participation, so everyone is very familiar with the sound. (We recommend always getting a partner when working with a ladder, for safety.) If you don't hear the long beep, make sure that the batteries are not loose, the cover is tight, and for hard-wired alarms that the power is working properly. After troubleshooting, if you still can't get a long beep, replace your alarm right away.

*USE EXTRA CAUTION when troubleshooting or installing hard-wired alarms, and consider enlisting the help of an electrician.*



## 2. Replace the Batteries Every Year.

Unless your alarm came with lithium ion batteries sealed/enclosed inside, you will need to replace the batteries at least once a year ... ideally every six months. (If your alarm starts chirping, immediately change the batteries!) One way to remember this is to do battery changes whenever you adjust your clocks for Daylight Savings Time.

**“CHANGE YOUR CLOCKS, CHANGE YOUR BATTERIES!”**

## 3. Replace All Smoke Alarms Every 10 Years.

Even a good smoke alarm is not designed to last more than 10 years. After that time, they are not reliable. With your life and the lives of your family, guests, and pets on the line, don't take chances! If you're not sure how old your alarms are, carefully take down the smoke alarm, turn it over to see the back, and look for a small stamp or sticker that shows a date. This is the manufacture date when the alarm was made. If it's more than 10 years old, install a new alarm! If it's less than 10 years, make a note of when it will need to be replaced then put it back up.



## What Kind of Smoke Alarms Should I Have?

The Pflugerville Fire Department recommends purchasing a major brand from an established hardware or home supply source. Make sure you get alarms with the label of a recognized testing laboratory. Save and always follow the manufacturer's instructions.

We encourage you to get **“dual sensor”** smoke alarms. An alarm with a “photoelectric” sensor is better at detecting slow, smoldering fires, while an alarm with an “ionization” sensor is better at detecting fast flaming fires. Make sure your home has at least one of each kind, and get as many dual-sensor alarms as you can.

You may also consider having at least one alarm in your home that is a **“combination”** alarm that can detect both smoke and carbon monoxide. Often called C-O, carbon monoxide is a deadly odorless, colorless gas that can be emitted from any type of fireplace, gas-powered appliances, and vehicles.

The best protection comes from alarms that are **interconnected** or **“hard-wired”** meaning they are tied into your electricity, with a battery back-up. When one alarm sounds in your home, they all sound!

## Should I get alarms with traditional batteries or lithium ion batteries?

Alarms with traditional batteries are fine, but those batteries must be changed at least once a year ... and you may experience a “chirping” sound when the batteries are dying.

However, we recommend you invest in lithium ion batteries, which are now available as 9 volts (9V). Lithium ion batteries are designed to last 10 years, which is the average lifespan of a smoke alarm, reducing your trips up the ladder to replace batteries.

Many alarms now come with 10-year lithium batteries sealed inside, preventing anyone from tampering with it or removing the battery. We call these “low maintenance, high protection” smoke alarms! **NOTE:** If an alarm with an enclosed/sealed lithium ion battery starts to chirp, replace the ENTIRE alarm right away!

**IMPORTANT!** All smoke alarms, regardless of battery type, should be tested every month. This is true both for battery-only alarms AND those that are hard-wired (connected to your home's electricity).