

Smoke Detector Maintenance Tips

Keeping your smoke alarms working properly

- Test your smoke alarms at least once a month, following the manufacturer's instructions.
- Replace the batteries in your smoke alarm once a year, or as soon as the alarm "chirps," warning that the battery is low. **HINT: schedule battery replacements for the same day you change your clock from daylight to standard time in the fall.**
- Never "borrow" a battery from a smoke alarm. Smoke alarms can't warn you of fire if their batteries are missing or have been disconnected.
- Do not disable smoke alarms even temporarily – you may forget to replace the battery. If your smoke alarm is sounding "nuisance alarms," it may need dusting or vacuuming. If that does not work, try relocating it further away from kitchens and bathrooms, where cooking fumes and steam can cause the alarm to sound.
- Regularly vacuuming or dusting your smoke alarms following manufacturer's instructions can help keep it working properly.
- Smoke alarms do not last forever. Replace your smoke alarms once every 10 years.
- Make sure that everyone in your home can identify and awaken to the sound of the alarm.
- Plan regular fire drills (four times a year) to ensure that everyone knows exactly what to do when the smoke alarm sounds. Hold a drill at night to make sure that sleeping family members awaken at the sound of the alarm.
- If you are building a new home or remodeling your existing home, consider installing an automatic home fire sprinkler system. Sprinklers and smoke alarms together cut your risk of dying in a home fire 82 percent relative to having neither – a savings of thousands of lives a year.
- Homeowners living within the Dallas city limits that cannot afford a smoke detector can call 3-1-1; request a smoke detector and Dallas Fire- Rescue will install a smoke detector at no charge.