



# Smoke Alarm Safety

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The Northville Township Fire Department would like to provide a few fire safety tips to help protect you and your family. Our department trains every day to respond to fires and other emergencies, but the first step to fire safety always starts with you. With good fire safety habits, you can reduce the dangers of fire in our community. Good fire safety habits start with the proper installation and maintenance of smoke alarms. Smoke alarms are the single most effective device to help notify you of a fire and give you time to escape. Smoke alarms should be installed in every bedroom, outside each sleeping area and on every level of your home, including the basement.

There are two primary types of smoke alarm technology on the market today. The two types are *ionization* and *photoelectric* alarms. Ionization smoke alarms are more responsive to flaming fires, such as cooking or grease fires. Photoelectric smoke alarms are more responsive to smoldering, slow burning fires, such as fires caused by smoldering cigarettes. We recommend the installation of combination or “dual sensor” smoke alarms that provide the benefit of ionization and photoelectric technology in one device.

## **REMEMBER to test your smoke alarms every month.**

Alarms should be equipped with a test button on the front of the detector. You can use this monthly test as an opportunity to practice your home escape plan. Nearly two-thirds of all fire related deaths occur in homes without working smoke alarms.

The United States Fire Administration (USFA) recommends that **smoke alarm batteries should be replaced every year**. Some smoke alarms have long-life batteries and should be replaced according to the manufacturer’s recommendations. Alarms with long-life batteries should still be tested monthly. You may also have “hardwired” or “interconnected” smoke alarms. Most of these alarms still have a battery backup and should also be tested monthly. **As a general rule, all smoke alarms should be replaced at**

**least every 8 to 10 years**. If you are not sure of the age of your smoke alarms, remove the alarm from the ceiling and check the back of the unit. You should see the month and year of manufacture; if you don’t, they should be replaced. It is also helpful to vacuum the area around smoke alarms to keep them clean and operating effectively.

**REMEMBER** smoke alarms are only designed to provide early warning to give you and your family time to escape a house fire. When an alarm goes off, get your family out and do not go back inside. Once you are out of the house, call 911 and report the fire. The earlier our department is notified of a fire, the faster we can respond and the more effective we will be in extinguishing the fire.



You can help protect your family, your neighbors and your firefighters by making good fire safety practices part of your daily household chores. Make sure that all lighters, matches and candles are kept away from children. Keep all open flames away from clothing, curtains, furniture and other household items. Safe electrical practices are important as well. Make sure that all surge protectors and extension cords are used according to the manufacturer’s recommendations and intended uses. Do not plug surge protectors into other surge protectors or overload plugs or circuits. Never run extension cords under carpet or through doorways; and only use extension cords temporarily.

Help us keep you and your family safe by creating good fire safety habits. Please visit us at [www.northvillemich.com/fire](http://www.northvillemich.com/fire), or visit [www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org) or [www.usfa.dhs.gov/smokealarms](http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/smokealarms) for more fire safety tips. Contact Northville Township Fire Inspector Tom Hughes at (248) 348-5807 or via email at [thughes@twp.northville.mi.us](mailto:thughes@twp.northville.mi.us) with any questions.

# Smoke Alarm Safety at Home



Smoke alarms are an important part of a home fire escape plan. When there is a fire, smoke spreads fast. Working smoke alarms give you early warning so you can get outside quickly.

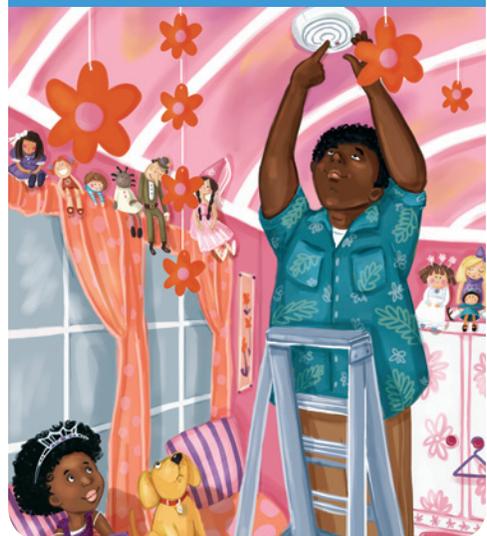
## SAFETY TIPS

- » INSTALL smoke alarms inside every bedroom, outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home, including the basement.
- » Larger homes may need ADDITIONAL smoke alarms to provide enough protection.
- » For the best protection, INTERCONNECT all smoke alarms so when one sounds they all sound.
- » An IONIZATION smoke alarm is generally more responsive to flaming fires and a PHOTOELECTRIC smoke alarm is generally more responsive to smoldering fires. For the best protection, both types of alarms or combination ionization and photoelectric alarms (also known as dual sensor alarms) are recommended.
- » Smoke alarms should be INSTALLED away from the kitchen to prevent false alarms. Generally, they should be at least 10 feet (3 meters) from a cooking appliance.
- » REPLACE all smoke alarms when they are 10 years old.

## FACTS

- ! Roughly **two thirds** of home fire deaths happen in homes with no smoke alarms or no working smoke alarms.
- ! Working smoke alarms cut the risk of dying in reported home fires in **half**.

**AND DON'T FORGET...**  
All smoke alarms should be tested at least once a month using the test button.



Your Source for SAFETY Information [www.nfpa.org/education](http://www.nfpa.org/education)  
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