



The Office of the  
Fire Marshal

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## INSTALL SMOKE ALARMS IT'S THE LAW!



Most fatal fires occur at night when people are asleep. Often, victims never wake up. A working smoke alarm will detect smoke and sound an alarm to alert you, giving you precious time to escape.

Every home in Ontario must have a working smoke alarm on every storey and outside all sleeping areas.

### Homeowners

It is the responsibility of homeowners to install and maintain smoke alarms on every storey of their home and outside sleeping areas.

### Landlords

It is the responsibility of landlords to ensure their rental properties comply with the law.

### Tenants

If you are a tenant of a rental property and do not have the required number of smoke alarms, contact your landlord immediately. It is against the law for tenants to remove the batteries or tamper with the alarm in any way.

**Failure to comply with the Fire Code smoke alarm requirements could result in a ticket for \$235 or a fine of up to \$50,000 for individuals or \$100,000 for corporations**

## SMOKE ALARM INSTALLATION AND MAINTENANCE

### Choose the right alarms

There are smoke alarms available with different features and applications, so choosing the right alarm can be confusing. Some of the features to consider include:

- **Power Source:** Smoke alarms can be electrically powered, battery powered, or a combination of both. If you are installing an electrically powered alarm it is recommended that it have a battery back-up in case of power failures.
- **Technology:** most smoke alarms employ either

manufacturer's instructions when installing smoke alarms.

Avoid putting smoke alarms too close to bathrooms, windows, ceiling fans and heating and cooking appliances.

### Test smoke alarms monthly

Test your smoke alarms every month by using the test button on the alarm. When the test button is pressed, the alarm should sound. If it fails to sound, make sure that the battery is installed correctly or install a new battery. If the alarm still fails to sound, replace the smoke alarm with a new one.

### Replace older smoke alarms

All smoke alarms wear out. If your alarms are more than 10 years old, replace them with new ones.

### Handle nuisance alarms

Steam from the shower or cooking in the oven, stove or toaster can cause smoke alarms to activate. If these types of nuisance alarms occur, **do not remove the battery**. There are several options you can try to reduce nuisance alarms.

- Relocate the alarm. Sometimes moving the

ionization or photo-electric technology. Ionization alarms may respond slightly faster to flaming-type fires, while photo-electric alarms may be quicker at detecting slow, smouldering fires.

- **Pause feature:** Smoke alarms with a pause button are highly recommended as it permits the alarm to be temporarily silenced without disconnecting the power source.

#### Install in the proper locations

Smoke alarms must be installed on each storey of the home as well as outside sleeping areas. Because smoke rises, smoke alarms should be installed on the ceiling. If this is not possible, install the alarm high up on a wall. Always follow the

#### Change the batteries every year

Install a new battery at least once a year, or as recommended by the manufacturer. Install a new battery if the low-battery warning sounds or if the alarm fails to sound when tested.

#### Vacuum alarms annually

Dust can clog your smoke alarms. Battery-powered smoke alarms should be cleaned by opening the cover of the alarm and gently vacuuming the inside with a soft bristle brush.

For electrically-connected smoke alarms, first shut off the power to the unit, and then gently vacuum the outside vents of the alarm only. Turn the power back on and test the alarm.

alarm just a few inches can make the difference.

- Install a smoke alarm with a pause button that will allow you to temporarily silence the alarm.
- Replace alarms located near kitchens with photo-electric types.

#### Plan your escape

Make sure that everyone knows the sound of the smoke alarm and what to do if it activates. Create an escape plan with the entire household and practice it. Make sure your plan identifies two ways out of each room, if possible, and a meeting place outside. Once outside, stay outside. Never re-enter a burning building. Call the fire department from a neighbours' home or cell phone.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT SMOKE ALARMS,  
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