

## Smoke Alarm Tips

The importance of Smoke Alarms can never be stressed enough. National statistics and studies have proven this. Everyone should understand and recognize the need and importance of smoke alarms. This document will touch on the practicality of them.

When first introduced during the early 70's, professionally installed alarms for a typical three bedroom home cost nearly \$1,000.00. In today's market that same home could cost less than \$100.00. (A cheap investment for our first line of defense against fires.)

Smoke alarms, like anything else; vary in costs, types, and installation procedures. Careful attention to the installation instructions must be taken. Smoke alarms should be installed on the ceiling 6 to 8 inches out from the corner or 6 to 8 inches below the ceiling on walls. One should be located at each bedroom and on each floor of the residence. Major areas such as the kitchen and furnace/utility rooms should have them. The majority of codes require them in this area. If they don't they should. Smoke alarms have a life expectancy of 8 to 10 years and are found in most hardware, and home supply stores. It is strongly recommend using UL-Listed alarms only. Types and descriptions of various alarms follow:

- basic smoke alarms cost anywhere from \$10.00 to \$20.00 each. These alarms are normally installed using a basic screw driver or even better yet have a sticky pad available on the bottom side. They use a 9-volt battery and sound a short audible "chirp or beep" when the battery is low and needs replacing.
- Whole unit replacement alarms - Exactly the same as a basic smoke alarm except they are designed to be replaced as a whole unit, thus avoiding the need for battery replacement. Some come with a ten-year battery. Prices vary from \$15.00 on up.
- "Hard wired" alarms. These alarms are connected to a 110-volt electrical circuit and may or may not have battery back up. Battery back up is recommended. Prices vary from \$25.00 on up for each alarm, plus installation costs. They may be installed individually or in series. In series means when one alarm "sounds off" they all do.
- Hearing Impaired alarms. Specifically designed for the hearing impaired these alarms cost over \$100.00 each. These alarms are required to operate on a 110-volt electrical circuit. Some are "hard wired" and others simply plug into an existing receptacle. These alarms produce a brilliant illuminating strobe light which when activated will interrupt the deepest sleep. Most have an extremely loud alarm with the strobe light, and also have battery back up.

*(If you know of any family in need of any one of these alarms but are financially challenged, please have them contact the NACHI Foundation or contact them yourself at [www.nachifoundation.org](http://www.nachifoundation.org) to see how they may help or assist in the purchase of these alarms. Also check with your local Fire Departments or municipalities. Some offer smoke alarms for little or no cost, and will even install them for you. When calling use THE NON-EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBER.)*

### **Maintenance of smoke alarms is basic. Here are some tips:**

- Test monthly.
- Clean regularly. Dust and debris will interfere with normal operation.
- Replace batteries twice a year.
- Schedule regular maintenance and tests.
- Never remove batteries to disable an alarm that sounds every time you cook. The alarm is working fine; it's your cooking habits that may need investigating.

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