

Living Safely

with disabilities and special health needs

Smoke Alarms

Smoke alarms are made to warn people that there may be a fire. Smoke from a fire can spread very fast.

Smoke alarms are an important way to alert people when there is smoke in the area because the alarm warns you so that you can get out of danger quickly.

There are different types of smoke alarms. There are specialized smoke alarms that have strobing lights and others that vibrate. It is very important that you have smoke alarms that will be the safest for you and where you live. You can contact your local fire department for assistance finding smoke alarms that fit your specific needs.

When smoke alarms are working properly, an alarm sounds when it recognizes smoke.

Make sure to install standard smoke alarms in places that will help to keep you safe:

- In your house or apartment, install a smoke alarm in every bedroom.
- Smoke alarms should also be placed on the other side of the door of every sleeping area.
- If your house or apartment has more than one level, place a smoke alarm on each level. If the level doesn't have a bedroom, be sure that there is a smoke alarm in the living room or family room near the stairs.
- If you are in a large house, you may need extra smoke alarms.
- Since smoke rises in the air, it is important to place smoke alarms on the ceiling or as high as possible on a wall.
- Try to keep smoke alarms away from the kitchen because the alarm may sound when someone is cooking. It is recommended that a smoke alarm be at least 10 feet from a stove or oven.
- Specialized smoke alarms may need to be placed in different places. Contact your local fire department for assistance in placing these types of smoke alarms in your house or apartment.

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It is important to make sure smoke alarms are operating properly. Here are some ways to do that:

- Test each smoke alarm at least once a month. To do that, press the test button on the smoke alarm to be sure it is working. The alarm is loud and can be startling. If you are unable to test the alarm, ask someone to do it for you.
- Smoke alarm batteries should be replaced at least once a year. It is helpful to remind yourself by putting it on your calendar. If you need assistance changing the batteries in your smoke alarms, you can ask someone for assistance or reach out to your local fire department.
- Smoke alarms should be replaced when they are not working and when they are ten years old. The date a smoke alarm was manufactured is located on the back of the alarm. You can ask for assistance if you need help checking that date and assisting you in replacing your smoke alarms.

We value the expertise of our partners in safety who have demonstrated their commitment to inclusive healthy communities. Portions of this resource have been adapted from Safe Kids Worldwide (www.safekids.org).

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