

# Is Your Smoke Detector Protecting You?

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- ✓ **A working smoke detector can triple your chances of surviving a fire.**
- ✓ **A clean, properly installed smoke detector can give you valuable minutes of early warning in an emergency.**

## Smoke rises

Place your smoke detector on or near the ceiling. Make sure you place your detector at least three feet away from any air vents so smoke doesn't get blown away before the detector can sense it.

## Check your batteries

Test your detector once a month, and replace your batteries once a year. To test most detectors, you either push a button or shine a light. It may be helpful to connect this with a regular event such as payday. Pick an annual event, like New Year's Day or daylight savings time, to replace your batteries - even if they still work. Never disconnect your smoke detector or "borrow" the batteries for something else. Again, follow the manufacturer's directions. If your detector "chirps" it's probably time to replace the batteries. If you rent, ask your landlord how to check the batteries and maintain the detector when you move in.

## Put at least one detector in each sleeping area

One detector per sleeping area is the absolute minimum. If all the bedrooms in your home share a single hallway, place the smoke detector in the hall outside the rooms. You should have an additional detector outside every bedroom that doesn't share a common hallway. If you sleep with the door closed, put another detector inside the bedroom. On floors without bedrooms, place detectors in or near living areas. A good place for a smoke detector in a two-story house is at the top of the stairs since smoke from downstairs will rise along that path. Follow the manufacturer's directions. The instructions will show you exactly where and how to install your smoke detector.

## Keep it clean

When you clean your home, remember your detector. Smoke detectors work by sensing very small smoke particles in the air. They can't detect the particles if the chambers are clogged with dust, or if they've been painted over. A once-a-week dusting or vacuuming will help to keep the detector's chambers clear.

## Practice escape routes

A smoke detector can give you enough time to get out. If you have young children or if you live with someone who needs assistance, discuss plans to help them get out. Practice and discuss fire safety with your family. A smoke detector won't prevent a fire, but it can give you an extra few minutes in an emergency that could save your family's lives. Use the time to get out of your house and gather your family in a safe, central location.