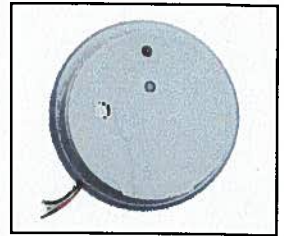




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## Residential Smoke Alarms In the City of Burlington

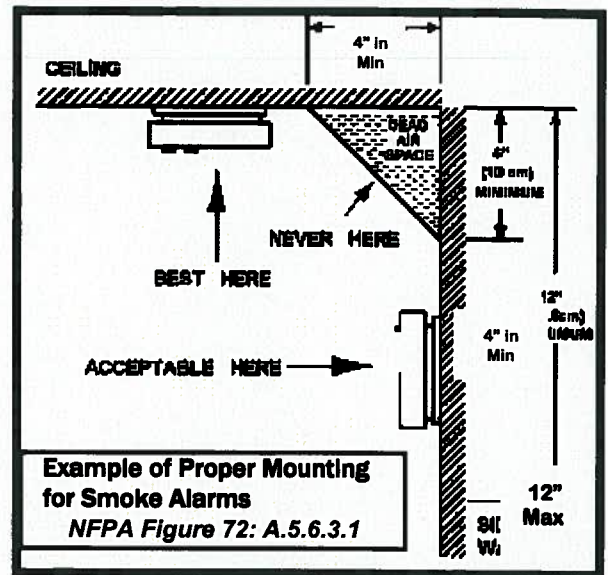
Effective November 25, 2009

### The Impact of Smoke Alarms

In the 1960's, the average U. S. citizen had never heard of a smoke alarm. By 1995, an estimated 93 percent of all American homes - single - and multi- family, apartments, nursing homes, dormitories, etc. - were equipped with alarms. In the event of a fire, properly installed and maintained smoke alarms will provide an early warning signal to your household. This alarm could save your own life and those of your loved ones by providing the chance to escape.

The installation of smoke alarms (detectors) must be in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions, Chapter 13-5 of the Burlington Code of Ordinances and NFPA 72, the National Fire Alarm Code, Section 72:11.8.3.5 which lists specific location requirements to improve reliability and avoid false alarms. Smoke alarms (detectors) must:

- be installed in every bedroom and on every level of the home,
- be interconnected so that any alarm causes all of the devices to alarm,
- be powered by the building electrical system and have battery backup,
- not be located where the humidity and temperature are outside of the limits specified by the manufacturer,
- not be located where temperatures fall below 40 degrees or exceed 100 degrees,
- be mounted on an inside wall or ceiling where outside walls or ceilings are poorly insulated,
- be photoelectric, or have alarm-silencing, when installed within 20 feet of a cooking appliance,
- not be installed within 36 inches from a door to a kitchen or bathroom containing a shower or tub,
- not be installed within 36 inches from a supply register of a forced hot-air heating or cooling system,
- not be installed within 36 inches from the tip of a blade of a fan suspended from a ceiling,
- be located in a stairway so that an intervening door or obstruction does not prevent rising smoke from reaching the alarm (detector),
- be located on the basement ceiling near the entry to the stairs.



### Why should my home have smoke alarms?

In the event of a fire, a smoke alarm can save your life and those of your loved ones. They are the single most important means of preventing house and apartment fire fatalities by providing an early warning signal -- so you and your family can escape.

### Can I install combination alarms?

The law allows for the installation of combination smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, but not for combination photoelectric and ionization alarms.

### What if the alarm goes off while I'm cooking?

Then it's doing its job. Do not disable your smoke alarm if it alarms due to cooking or other non-fire causes. You may not remember to put the batteries back in the alarm after cooking. Instead, clear the air by waving a towel near the alarm, leaving the batteries in place. The alarm may have to be moved to a new location.

## Where do I put them?

Install smoke alarms in every bedroom and on every level of your home, including the basement. Most fire fatalities occur between 2 a.m. and 6 a.m. when most people are sleeping. Contrary to popular belief, the smell of smoke may not wake a sleeping person. Instead, the poisonous gases and smoke produced by a fire can dull the senses and put one into a deeper sleep. The only thing standing between the deadly fumes of a fire and a safe escape is the piercing sound of a smoke alarm.

Cooking food or steam from the shower may result in frequent nuisance alarms. Consider moving the alarm or using a smoke alarm with a "hush" feature for smoke alarms located near these areas.

## Updating Smoke Alarms

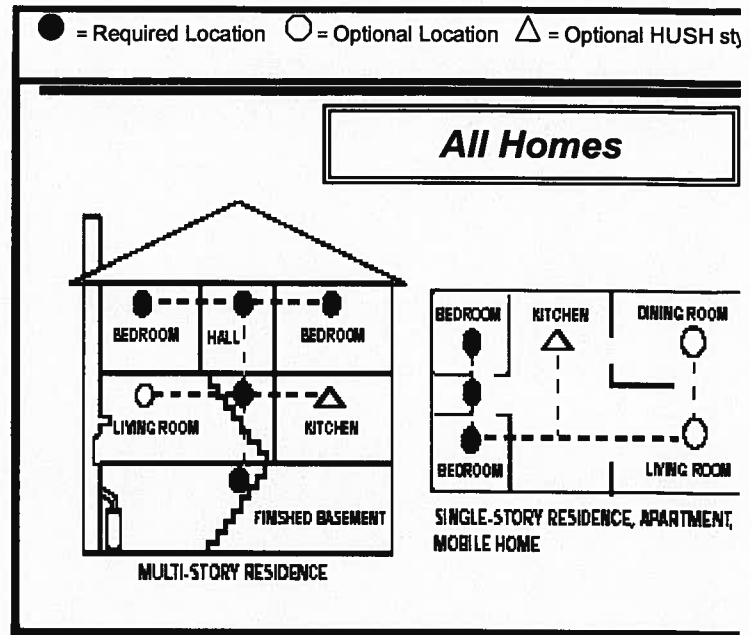
Smoke alarms don't last forever. Smoke alarms need to be Replaced every 10 years.

If your smoke alarms are 10 years old or more it's time to replace them with new photoelectric ones.

There's a label on the alarm with the date of manufacture. If it doesn't have a label, it's already more than ten years old. Smoke alarms need to be properly installed, maintained and replaced when needed.

Many hardware, home supply or general merchandise stores carry smoke alarms. Make sure the alarm you buy is a photoelectric style and is UL-listed. If you are unsure where to buy one in your community, call your local fire department (on a non-emergency telephone number) and they will provide you with some suggestions.

No home should be without smoke alarms, and ionization alarms should continue to be used until a home can be equipped with new photoelectric alarms. And remember installation of an early warning smoke alarm system combined with a well-rehearsed plan for escape may save the lives of you and your family.



## How long will my smoke alarm last?

About eight-to-ten years, after which it should be replaced. Like most electrical devices, smoke alarms wear out. You may want to write the purchase date with a marker on the inside of your unit. That way, you'll know when to replace it. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions for replacement.

## How do I take care of my smoke alarms?

Smoke alarms are pretty easy to maintain. Unfortunately, improper maintenance is a big reason smoke alarms fail. According to a study by the Consumer Product Safety Commission, 90 percent of U.S. households have smoke alarms. However, the smoke alarms in 20 percent of these households - about 16 million - weren't working.

This sheet is designed to promote fire prevention, code compliance and to enhance the public safety of the residents of Burlington, Vermont. This sheet provides a detailed overview of one common issue and is not an all-inclusive list of state laws, municipal ordinances or additional code requirements that may apply. For additional information or details you should contact the Burlington Fire Department, Office of the Fire Marshal at 864-5577. This sheet was developed as an educational resource with information provided from the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and the Vt Division of Fire Safety.