Seasonal Fire Safety Series

Alarm Yourself - Smoke Alarms

MAY

Tacoma Fire Prevention Bureau 3471 S. 35th St. Tacoma WA, 98409

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Roughly 70 percent of home fire deaths result from fires in homes with no working smoke alarms. Smoke alarms are one of the great safety success stories of the 20th century - but only when they're working properly. Alarm yourself with the knowledge to be safer from fires!

Who Should Have Smoke Alarms?

Every home should have at least one smoke alarm. In the event of a fire, a smoke alarm can save lives.

A properly installed and maintained smoke alarm will provide an early warning signal to your household providing the chance to escape.

Where Do I Install My Smoke Alarms?

Install smoke alarms on every level of your home, including the basement. Many fatal fires begin late at night or in the early morning. For extra safety, install smoke alarms both inside and outside any sleeping areas.

Smoke alarms are not hard to install. In most cases, all you will need is a screwdriver. Follow the manufacturer's installation instructions.

How Do I Keep Them Working?

There are two simple steps to remember when caring for your smoke alarms.

1. Replace the battery at least once a year in models that use 9 volt batteries. You can also purchase a new style of alarm that comes with a 10 year lithium battery that does not require you to change the battery for the life of the alarm.
2. Keep them clean. Dust and debris can interfere with how smoke alarms work. Regularly vacuum over your smoke alarm to keep it working right.

What's Chirping?

The "chirping" noise lets you know that the battery in your smoke alarm needs to be replaced.

What If The Alarm Goes Off While I Am Cooking?

Then it is doing its job. Do not disable your smoke alarm if it activates 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. Additionally, many new smoke alarms have a hush button feature that you can push to silence the alarm for 5 minutes until the air has cleared.

When Do I Need to Replace My Smoke Alarms?

Smoke alarms should function properly for ten years. Like most electrical appliances, smoke alarms wear out. After ten years your smoke alarm will have been working for over 87,000 continuous hours.

You may want to write the purchase date (with a permanent marker) on the back of your smoke alarm. That way you will know when it should be replaced.

What If I Can't Afford Smoke Alarms?

In some situations, the Tacoma Fire Department can provide and install smoke alarms for owner-occupied homes in the City of Tacoma. If you live in the city and own your own home call the Tacoma Fire Department at 253.591.5740 to request assistance.

What If I Rent?

Your landlord is required by law (RCW 48.48.140) to provide you with a working smoke alarm at the time you move into your home. Tenants are required to maintain the alarm in working order.

For More Information Contact:
Tacoma Fire Department
Public Education Office
253.591.5740

www.tacomafiredepartment.org

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