

SMOKE ALARM INFORMATION



SMOKE ALARM LAWS

In Ontario, working smoke alarms are required by law on every level of the home and outside of all sleeping areas. Homes that were built or renovated after January 1, 2015 are also required to have a working smoke alarm equipped with a visual signal device (flashing strobe light) located inside each bedroom. Smoke alarms are required to be installed on or near a ceiling in accordance with manufacturer recommendations. The alarms must function correctly when the test button is pressed, and need to be replaced in accordance with manufacturer's instructions. Failing to install and maintain working smoke alarms in required locations is against the law in Ontario. It is also against the law to disable a smoke alarm in any way, including removing the battery or disconnecting the power.

Failure to comply with smoke alarm laws can result in charges being laid under the Fire Protection and Prevention Act.

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

INSTALL IN PROPER LOCATIONS

Ontario law requires that a working smoke alarm be installed on every storey of the home and outside all sleeping areas. They must be installed in accordance with manufacturer's instructions. Avoid installing smoke alarms in or near kitchens and bathrooms, or near vents, windows or ceiling fans.

CHANGE THE BATTERIES TWICE PER YEAR

Smoke alarm batteries should be replaced at least once, preferably twice per year. We recommend changing the batteries when you change the clocks for daylight savings. Smoke alarm batteries should also be changed whenever the low-battery warning sounds. Always test your smoke alarms after installing a new battery.

TEST SMOKE ALARMS MONTHLY

Smoke alarms should be tested at least once per month and upon returning home after an absence of more than 48 hours. If the alarm fails to sound when the test button is pressed, install a new battery. If the alarm still fails to sound when the test button is pressed, replace the alarm.

REPLACE SMOKE ALARMS AFTER 10 YEARS

By law smoke alarms must be replaced in accordance with manufacturer's recommendations. There should be a sticker with either a "replace by" date or a "date of manufacture" located somewhere on your alarm. Smoke alarms that are more than 10 years old should be replaced with new ones. This includes hard-wired smoke alarms.

DETECTION TYPE

PHOTOELECTRIC SMOKE ALARMS

Photoelectric smoke alarms use a beam of light to detect smoke. They are more responsive to fires that begin with a long period of smoldering. Photoelectric smoke alarms tend to be less prone to nuisance alarms caused by steam and cooking etc.

IONIZATION SMOKE ALARMS

Ionization smoke alarms detect fire by sensing changes in heat and air quality in your home. They are more responsive to flaming fires but are more susceptible to nuisance alarms due to cooking.

INSTALLATION TYPE

HARD-WIRED SMOKE ALARMS

Hard-wired smoke alarms are powered directly by your home's electricity. Hard-wired smoke alarms will not function in the event of a power outage, so make sure your alarms have a battery back-up feature, or install additional battery-operated smoke alarms.

If you are replacing a hard-wired smoke alarm, you must replace it with another hard-wired unit. You cannot substitute a battery operated smoke alarm in its place.

BATTERY OPERATED SMOKE ALARMS

Battery operated smoke alarms get their power from batteries. Batteries, including those in hard-wired alarms with a battery back-up, should be replaced when the low-battery indicator chirps, if the smoke alarm doesn't function properly when tested, or every 6 months.

Smoke alarms are now available with 10 year lithium batteries which never need to be replaced for the life of the unit. These smoke alarms are great for hard to reach places and those who have difficulty maintaining their smoke alarms.

INTER-CONNECTION

INTERCONNECTED SMOKE ALARMS

Interconnected smoke alarms communicate with each other so when one smoke alarm detects fire they all sound. These smoke alarms provide your family with the highest level of early warning in the event of fire. If you have more than one hard-wired smoke alarm in your home, they should already be interconnected.

WIRELESS INTERCONNECTED ALARMS

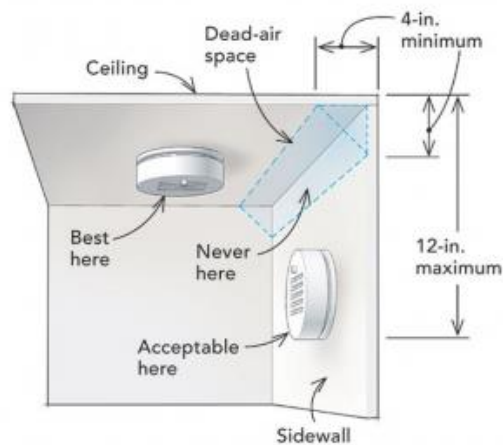
Interconnected smoke alarms can also be installed in homes that aren't already wired for it. Wireless interconnected smoke alarms are battery operated alarms which still communicate with each other using wireless signals. These alarms can also be great for detection in a nearby building such as a garage or shed.

INSTALLATION LOCATIONS

In Ontario, working smoke alarms are required by law on every level of the home and outside of all sleeping areas. Homes that were built or renovated after January 1, 2015 are also required to have a working smoke alarm equipped with a visual signal device (flashing strobe light) located inside each bedroom. Smoke alarms must be installed on or near a ceiling in accordance with manufacturer's recommendations.

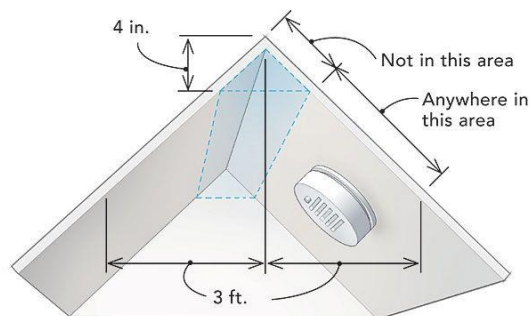
CEILING / WALL PLACEMENT

Smoke rises. Smoke alarms should be located up either on a ceiling (minimum of 4" away from a wall) or high on a wall (between 4" – 12" down from the ceiling). Smoke alarms must be installed in accordance with manufacturer's guidelines, but this graphic can be used as a general guideline for where to place them.



SLOPED / PITCHED CEILINGS

In rooms with sloped or pitched ceilings, smoke alarms should be installed near the top of the ceiling. They should be at least 4" down from the peak but must be placed within 3' of the peak (measured horizontally). Smoke alarms must be installed on sloped / pitched ceilings in accordance with manufacturer's guidelines, but this graphic can be used as a general guideline for where to place smoke alarms in rooms with sloped / pitched ceilings.



COMBINATION ALARMS AND SPECIAL FEATURES

SMOKE ALARMS WITH CO ALARMS

Some smoke alarms are combination units which detect carbon monoxide as well as smoke and fire. Combination alarms are available in hard-wired or battery operated models, and have two different alarm sounds to tell you whether its smoke or CO.

SPECIAL FEATURES

Since it is against the law to disable smoke alarms, many smoke alarms are now available with features such as “hush” buttons, which temporarily silences a nuisance alarm.

Additionally, smoke alarms are available with strobe lights, pillow/bed shakers, and other notifiers for those who are hearing or visually impaired.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. Do I have to have a smoke alarm in my kitchen?

A. Smoke alarms are not required in kitchens and it is not recommended that you put one in or near your kitchen because it would be prone to false alarms. A smoke alarm would only be required in a kitchen if there is a bedroom attached to the kitchen, because smoke alarms are required outside of all sleeping areas. If you must put a smoke alarm in or near your kitchen, we recommend an alarm that has a “hush” feature. Photoelectric smoke alarms are less prone to nuisance alarms and are better suited for use near a kitchen than an ionization smoke alarm would be.

Q. Do I have to install a smoke alarm inside my bedrooms?

A. If your home was built or renovated after January 1, 2015 then you are required to have a smoke alarm with a visual signal device (strobe light) inside all sleeping areas. This is in addition to the smoke alarms that must be outside of the sleeping areas, which is a requirement for all Ontario homes. Even homes that do not require a smoke alarm in the bedrooms are recommended to install them in the sleeping areas anyway. This adds an extra level of early warning protection, especially for individuals who sleep with bedroom doors closed.

Q. Do I have to replace the batteries in a hard-wired smoke alarm?

A. It is strongly recommended that any hard-wired smoke alarms you might have in your home also have a battery back-up in case of a power outage. All smoke alarms that have batteries, including hard-wired alarms with battery back-up, must have their batteries replaced routinely. We recommend changing them twice per year and suggest doing so when you change the clocks for daylight savings.

Q. Why do I have to replace my smoke alarm after 10 years?

A. As is the case with the majority of our home electrical devices, smoke alarms cannot last forever. Smoke alarm sensors will degrade over time, leading to a reduced sensitivity in detecting smoke. While the alarms will still function when the replace-by date is reached, it is unlikely they will be sensitive enough to detect smoke within a suitable timeframe. As a result; fire alarms should to be replaced every 10 years. It is law to replace all smoke alarms in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions.