

Will Your Smoke Alarm Wake You And Your Family In The Middle Of The Night?

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Do you know what your smoke alarm sounds like? Do your children? Will it wake you in the middle of the night? Hold a fire drill at night to make sure that sleeping family members awaken at the sound of the alarm. This could save a life. Families need to have a meeting place outside in front of the house. Everyone in the home should know where the meeting place is. Practice the fire escape plan twice a year to ensure that everyone knows exactly what to do when the smoke alarm sounds. Know what your child will do before a fire occurs.

Roughly half of home fire deaths result from fire in the small percentage of homes with no smoke alarms. Homes with smoke alarms (whether or not they are operational) typically have a death rate that is 40-50% less than the rate for homes without alarms. In one-quarter of the reported fires in homes equipped with smoke alarms, the devices did not work. Because of missing, disconnected or dead batteries, households with non-working smoke alarms now outnumber those with no smoke alarms. Which household are you?

Smoke alarms need to be on every level of your home, including the basement, making sure there is an alarm outside every separate sleeping area. Smoke alarms should also be *in* every sleeping room. Hard-wired smoke alarms operate on household electrical current. They can be interconnected so that every alarm sounds regardless of the fire's location. This is an advantage in early warning, because it gives occupants extra time to escape if they are in one part of the home and a fire breaks out in another part. Alarms that are hard-wired should have battery backups in case of a power outage, and

should be installed by a qualified electrician. Maintaining smoke alarms is fairly easy. Test your smoke alarms once a month, following the manufacture's instructions. Regularly vacuum or dust smoke alarms, following the manufacturer's instructions, to keep them working properly. Smoke alarms don't last forever. Replace smoke alarms every 10 years. If you can't remember how old the alarm is, then it's probably time for a new one. Replace the batteries in smoke alarm batteries when you change your clocks for daylight savings time.

If you need assistance assessing your smoke alarms, or to install battery operated smoke alarms, call the **Spring Lake Park-Blaine-Mounds View Fire Department at 763-767-4003.**

Source: NFPA's "U.S. Experience with Smoke Alarm and Other Fire Detection/Alarm Equipment."