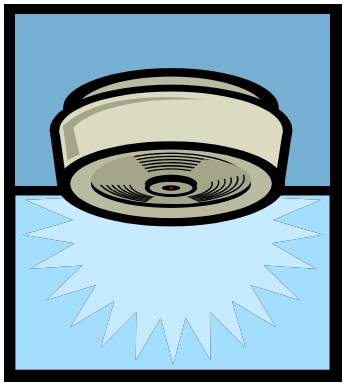

HOME SMOKE ALARMS

*Alarms save lives…*sixty-five percent of home fire deaths happen in homes with no smoke alarms at all or no smoke alarms that work. When there is a fire, smoke spreads fast and you need smoke alarms to give you time to get out. Fire is the second leading cause of accidental death in a home. Children and the elderly are at twice the risk of dying or being injured in a house fire.

Choosing your alarms…

- ✓ Make sure the smoke alarm has the label of a recognized testing laboratory.
- ✓ Alarms that run on household current (even if they include battery backup) required installation by a qualified electrician.
- ✓ Alarms that run on just batteries can be installed by anyone.
- ✓ Smoke alarms that include a recordable voice announcement in addition to the usual alarm sound may be helpful in waking children through the use of a familiar voice.
- ✓ Smoke alarms that also use strobe lights are available for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. Vibration equipment (to shake the bed and wake the person) can be added to these alarms.
- ✓ Ionization Types: These models pass an electric current through a sensing chamber. When smoke enters the chamber, it reduces the flow of current and activates the alarm.
- ✓ Photoelectric Types: These smoke alarms aim a light source into a 'sensing chamber'. When smoke enters the chamber, the light is reflected onto a photocell that activates the alarm.
- ✓ Battery Powered: These units are powered by simple 9 volt batteries. Some manufacturers offer smoke alarms powered by a non-replaceable 10 year battery. This is ideal for alarms in hard to reach locations or for people with disabilities.
- ✓ Hard Wired: You can wire smoke alarms right into your home's electrical system. Most hard-wired alarms come with a battery backup so they work when the power's out. Professional installation is required. Most local codes and bylaws require this type of alarm for newly constructed homes.
- ✓ Special Features: **Hush Buttons** reduce the alarms sensitivity to smoke. The alarm automatically returns to normal sensitivity after a short interval. **Strobe Light Alarms** are ideal for households with hearing loss occupants as these models flash a bright light in addition to sounding a conventional alarm.
- ✓ Interconnect: No matter where a fire starts, with an interconnected alarm system when one alarm sounds, they all sound, warning everybody in the home. This provides the best protection for people who sleep with the bedroom door closed or for those who may not wake to the alarm located outside the bedroom. Interconnection can be achieved through hard wiring by an electrician. Some manufacturers offer alarms that us wireless technology for interconnection. Interconnected alarms are required for most local codes and bylaws for newly constructed homes. For the best protection in existing homes, install interconnected alarms.

Nuisance alarms…

- ✓ If cooking fumes or steam sets of nuisance alarms, replace the alarms with an alarm that has a **hush** button, which will temporarily reduce the alarm's sensitivity for a short period of time.
- ✓ Use a photoelectric alarm or ionization alarm with a hush button if the alarm is within 20 feet of a cooking appliance.
- ✓ An ionization smoke alarm is generally more responsive to flaming fires and a photoelectric smoke alarm is generally more responsive to smoldering fires. Both types of detection alarms or a combination alarm (photoelectric and ionization) should be installed in the home.

Alarm installation and placement…

- ✓ Some states and jurisdictions allow smoke alarms to be installed on ceilings only.
- ✓ Install smoke alarms in every bedroom, outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home (including the basement). On floors without bedrooms, install alarms in the living room, den or family room, or near the stairway to the upper level. NFPA also suggests installing alarms in dining rooms, utility rooms or hallways. If a room has a pitched ceiling, mount the unit near the ceiling's highest point.
- ✓ Don't install an alarm near a forced air supply or return register where air currents could detour smoke away from the unit.
- ✓ Install basement smoke alarms on the basement ceiling near the entry to the stairs. Don't install an alarm at the top of the basement stairs. Dead air trapped near the closed door could prevent smoke from reaching the unit.
- ✓ Follow the manufacturer's installation instructions. Mount them on the ceiling at least 4 inches from the wall or on the wall at least 4-12 inches from the ceiling. Do not install near a window, door or air register.

Maintaining your alarms…

- ✓ Always save and follow the alarm manufacturer's instructions for testing and maintenance.
- ✓ Test alarms at least once a month by pushing the test button.
- ✓ Replace batteries in all smoke alarms at least once a year. If an alarm **chirps,** a warning that the battery is low, replace the battery right away.
- ✓ Never borrow batteries from smoke alarms for other purposes.
- ✓ Replace all smoke alarms, including alarms that use 10-year non-replaceable batteries and hard-wired alarms, when they are 10 years old or sooner if they do not respond properly when tested.
- ✓ Clean your smoke alarm often. Smoke alarms have small screens around the sensing chamber. They help keep small bugs out and dust out. Cleaning is easy – just vacuum around the outside of the alarm at least once a year. Never take the cover off the alarm or paint it.

Make sure that everyone in your home knows the sound of the smoke alarms and that the sound of the smoke alarms can wake everyone in the home.

TO LEARN MORE…

- ❖ Contact Brainerd Fire Department with any questions at 218-828-2312
- ❖ Home smoke alarms information: www.nfpa.org/homesmokealarms
- ❖ Safety information for kids: www.sparky.org

Smoke, not heat, is the leading cause of death in home fires. Smoke can engulf a home in under 10 minutes!