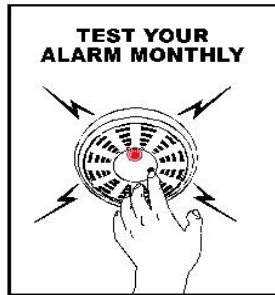


# SMOKE ALARMS

## WHAT IS A SMOKE ALARM?

A smoke alarm is a device that combines smoke detection and an audible alarm together in one unit. It will activate if smoke becomes present in abnormal amounts, usually caused by a fire.



## TYPES OF SMOKE ALARMS

Two types of smoke alarms are available for home use:

- Ionization (radioactive detection)
- Photoelectric (photocell detection)

These may be powered by

- battery
- hard-wired building electrical system

ULC (Underwriters' Laboratories of Canada) information indicates that both ionization and photoelectric units are tested to the same standards and are equally effective in detecting smoke and sounding an audible warning.

Installing both types of smoke alarms within a home can enhance life safety.

## WHY DO WE NEED SMOKE ALARMS?

The presence of a smoke alarm is important for all homes.

Under the Public Health Act – Housing Regulation, smoke alarms must be supplied in all rental dwellings, including

- apartment buildings
- dormitories
- hotels and motels
- lodging houses
- mobile homes
- rooming houses

## GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR ALARM PLACEMENT

There are two important points to remember when locating smoke alarms in dwelling units:

1. Point of origin for fires is usually a living area.
2. The main objective in locating smoke alarms is to provide warning to people asleep in bedrooms.

**Minimum** health standards for rental dwellings require that smoke alarm units be installed

- Between each sleeping area and the remainder of the suite
- Where the hallways serve the sleeping areas

## MAINTENANCE AND TESTING

Smoke alarms must be well-maintained and be in clean condition in order to be effective.

- Replace batteries at least once a year, or sooner if “chirping” indicates a low energy level.
- Replace smoke alarm units every 10 years, or sooner if malfunctions are detected.
- Regularly dust or vacuum the unit, and keep the unit free of paint, stickers, or other decorations that may prevent it from working properly.

Tenants are responsible for testing and maintaining smoke alarms in their units. Faulty units should be immediately reported to the landlord.

## WHAT SHOULD I DO WHEN AN ALARM SOUNDS?

Every household should have a fire escape plan, so that occupants can respond quickly in an emergency.

## WHAT ARE “FALSE” ALARMS?

The sound of an alarm when there is no real danger is called a false or nuisance alarm. The best way to deal with a false alarm is to fan away the smoke or push the “hush” button to silence the alarm.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Visit [www.capitalhealth.ca](http://www.capitalhealth.ca) or
- HealthLINK 408-5464
- Contact your local fire department

**For more information, please contact your nearest Environmental Public Health Services office.**

Edmonton Main Office (780) 413-7928  
Capital Health Centre – South Tower (780) 735-1400  
Strathcona (780) 342-4661

Spruce Grove (780) 962-7509  
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