

## Fire Department - Public Information - Public Education

The Office of Public Information and Public Education

### Annapolis Fire Department's Smoke Alarm Outreach

Did you know . . .

Every day in the United States 1,500 homes catch on fire. Each year 4,500 people die and 280, 000 are injured in residential fires. The majority of fire deaths occur at night, while everyone is asleep.

Adequate smoke alarms are a necessity to provide sufficient early warning in case of a fire.



#### How do they operate?

There are two types of smoke alarms:

- Ionization – A radioactive material is used to ionize the air in the sensing chamber. Smoke entering the chamber activates the alarm.
- Photo Electric – Works much like an electric eye on an automatic door. When smoke enters the chamber, the electric eye sees it, which activates the alarm.

#### How are they powered?

- Battery – The easiest to install because they do not require any connection to the home's electrical system. The challenge with these alarms is they require the battery to be replaced periodically for the unit to work.
- A/C Hard Wired without battery – These alarms are wired directly to the homes electrical system. These alarms do not operate if there is a power outage.
- AC hard Wired with battery backup – This is the best way an alarm can be powered. If the battery dies, it will still be powered by the home's electrical system. And if there is a power failure, the battery will continue to operate the alarm.

#### How and where should they be installed?

Follow the manufacturer's recommendations on proper placement. Avoid areas within 6-inches from where the ceiling meets the wall. The smoke will rise along the wall and curve to the ceiling delaying or never activating the smoke alarm.

**Proper Maintenance:**

- Check the power supply once a month once by pressing the test button.
- Change the battery at least once a year (when you change your clock-change your battery).
- Remove cobwebs, insect, or dust by vacuuming at least every six months.

**What is the life span of a smoke alarm?**

Smoke alarms should be replaced every ten years. Smoke alarms should also be replaced when they beep periodically and cannot be corrected by replacing the battery or vacuuming to remove the dust and cobwebs.

**If you need assistance**

The Annapolis Fire Department, through a partnership with the Department's Professional Firefighter's Association, Local 1926, can provide assistance to any citizen that cannot afford to purchase a fire alarm or needs help installing one.

**If you have any questions about smoke alarms or need assistance call (410) 263-7975 for help.**

Smoke alarms can be provided for free and will be installed by Annapolis Fire Department personnel. When available, State and federal grants are used to provide visual smoke alarms for the hearing impaired.