

# Smoke Detectors & Fire Extinguishers

## *Ever Vigilant Sentries That May Save Your Life*

*Half of the home fires and three-fifths of fire deaths occur in homes without smoke detectors. Hundreds of people die each year in homes with smoke detectors that don't work. It's important that you not only have a smoke detector, but that you check and maintain it frequently*

### **You Need To Know What Kind of Smoke Detector You Have & How To Maintain It**

#### **Battery - Powered**

Battery-Powered smoke detectors operate on alkaline batteries. Unlike the bunny, they won't keep going forever. The battery should be checked weekly and replaced twice a year. A good time to do this is when you change your clock in the fall and spring.

#### **Hard - Wired without Battery Back-up**

This type of smoke detector operates on household current. As long as you have electricity, it will function, but if your house loses power, it will no longer function. If you have this type, you should also install battery - operated models for back-up.

#### **Hard - Wired with battery back-up**

These are hardwired models that have battery back-up so the detector will still function in case of power failure. If you have this type, the battery should be changed twice a year or when needed.

#### **Hearing Impaired**

There are smoke detectors available that have been designed for the hearing impaired. These smoke detectors have strobe lights that, when activated, emit an extremely bright white light that is able to awaken most people from their sleep.

#### **\*\*REMEMBER**

**Change Your Smoke Alarm Battery The Same Day That You Set Your Clocks Forward or Back!**

### **Important Information About Smoke Detectors**

#### **Make Placement a Priority**

- At a **minimum**, there should be a smoke detector in the hallways and corridors between the sleeping areas and the rest of the house, and/or a smoke detector in the center of the ceiling directly above each stairway.
- Additional measures include installing smoke detectors on a wall or the ceiling in each sleeping room.
- Because smoke rises, smoke detectors should be mounted high on the wall or ceiling. A ceiling - mounted unit should be placed as close to the center of the room as possible, or a minimum of 12 inches from the wall. Avoid installing detectors near air supply duct outlets and windows and between bedrooms and the furnace cold air return. For a wall-mounted unit, the top of the detector should be 6-12 inches from the ceiling.
- Smoke detectors collect dust like everything else in a house. To ensure your smoke detector is clean, follow the manufacturer's recommendations for cleaning or use a vacuum cleaner to remove dust and cobwebs.

## ***Smoke Detector Replacement***

- It is recommended that detectors be **replaced every 10 years**. At 15 years, there is a 50/50 chance your detector will fail, almost 100% chance of failure at 30 years

## ***Know Your Fire Extinguisher A,B,C's***

A fire extinguisher is a storage container for a fire extinguishing agent such as water or chemicals. Fire extinguishers are labeled according to the type of fire they are intended for. Using the wrong type of extinguisher on a fire can make the situation much worse.

Traditionally, fire extinguishers have only been labeled with the letters A, B, C, or D to indicate the type of fire they are to be used on. Recently, pictograms or pictures have come into use. A blue pictogram or picture on the extinguisher indicates the type of fire it should be used on, and a black picture with a slash through it indicates the type of fire it should not be used on. Fire extinguishers may have the letter indicators, pictograms, or both.

### ***Fire Extinguisher Types***

**Type A:** Ordinary combustibles. To be used on fires in paper, cloth, wood, rubber, and many plastics. This is a water type extinguisher.

**Type B:** Flammable Liquids. To be used on oils, gasoline, some paints, lacquers, grease in a frying pan or an oven, solvents, and other flammable liquids.

**Type C:** Electrical Equipment. To be used on fires in wiring, fuse boxes, and other energized electrical equipment.

**Type D:** Metals. To be used on combustible metals such as magnesium and sodium.

### ***Buying and Maintaining a Fire Extinguisher***

If you plan to buy only one type of extinguisher, a multi-purpose dry chemical extinguisher labeled ABC puts out most types of fires.

1. The larger the extinguisher, the more fire it puts out. Make sure you can hold and operate the one you purchase.
2. Ask your dealer or contact your fire department to determine how to have your extinguisher serviced and inspected. Recharge or replace the extinguisher after any use.
3. Extinguishers should be installed near escape routes away from potential hazards.

**Remember - If there is a fire in your home, get everyone outside. DIAL 9-1-1.** Fight a small fire only. If the fire gets big, get out! Close doors to slow the fire spread and make sure you stay between the fire and exit.

### ***Learn How to P.A.S.S.***

1. **P**ull the pin. Some extinguishers require the releasing of a lock latch, pressing a puncture lever, or other similar motion.
2. **A**im the extinguisher nozzle (horn or hose) at the base of the fire.
3. **S**queeze or press the handle.
4. **S**weep from side to side at the base of the fire until it goes out. Shut off the extinguisher. Watch for a re-flash and reactivate the extinguishers if necessary. Foam and water extinguishers require a slightly different action. **Read the instructions.**