Smoke Alarms

Working smoke alarms are essential for preventing injuries and deaths caused by house fires. By giving you more time to escape, working smoke alarms can cut your risk of dying in a house fire by nearly half. Research by fire safety experts has found that house fires burn much hotter and faster than they did 20 or 30 years ago. Although a family might have had more than 20 minutes to escape a house fire in the 1970s, homes today contain more man-made (synthetic) materials that burn much faster, leaving families with as little as two minutes to escape a fire.

Smoke Alarm Facts

- More than nine out of 10 homes have a smoke alarm, but many of those alarms do not work, often because the batteries are missing or dead.
- Most children who die or are injured in a house fire are in a home without working smoke alarms.

How to Install a Smoke Alarm

- Install a smoke alarm on every level of your home, even in the basement.
- Install a smoke alarm outside every sleeping area. For the best protection, install a smoke alarm inside each bedroom as well.
- Smoke rises, so mount your smoke alarms high on walls or ceilings. Ceiling-mounted alarms should be installed at least 4 inches away from the nearest wall; wall-mounted alarms should be installed 4 to 12 inches away from the ceiling.

How to Keep Your Smoke Alarms Working Properly

- Test your smoke alarms at least one time every month. This will help you check that the alarms are working, and it will help your family become familiar with the sound of the alarms.
- Change the battery in each smoke alarm once a year and anytime the smoke alarm "chirps" to warn that the battery is low.
- Some newer smoke alarms come with batteries that last for 10 years. If you have a smoke alarm with a 10-year battery, you do not need to change the batteries each year, but you should still test the device monthly.
- Never leave your smoke alarms unplugged and never remove the batteries.
- Keep your smoke alarms clean by vacuuming them as needed.
- Replace your smoke alarms every 10 years.

CIPA Child Injury Prevention Alliance

For more information, please contact the Child Injury Prevention Alliance at (614) 398-CIPA (2472), www.childinjurypreventionalliance.org or info@childinjurypreventionalliance.org
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