



**STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND INSURANCE
STATE FIRE MARSHAL'S OFFICE**

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Smoke Alarm Installations

The Tennessee Fire Marshal's Office strongly recommends the installation of smoke alarms in every home to provide early warning of a fire. They should be located in every sleeping room; outside of sleeping areas, such as hallways; and at least one should be on every floor, including basements.

There are two types of smoke alarms available to homeowners: ionization and photoelectric. Ionization alarms are quicker to sense a flaming, fast moving fire. An example is a trash bin with burning paper. Photoelectric alarms are quicker to sense smoldering, smoky fires. An example is a burning cigarette left on a piece of furniture or mattress.

Because both types of detectors perform better for differing conditions, and a homeowner never knows how or when a fire will start, the Tennessee Fire Marshal's Office recommends installing combination smoke alarms that utilize both types of detection.

To remain reliable, smoke alarms must be maintained by regularly changing the battery—even hardwired smoke alarms. This will prevent the battery from being removed when it begins to “chirp”, putting the home at risk. The best times to change the batteries are when we “spring forward” and “fall back” for daylight savings. Alarms also need to be cleaned regularly. Follow the manufacturer's directions. Many recommend using the hose attachment of a vacuum cleaner to remove built up dust.