



SMART CHOICES *for* SMOKE ALARM PLACEMENT

Media Talking Points

The following messages can be used when discussing the importance of having enough working smoke alarms and the advantages of location-based smoke alarms in residences.

General Statement on Location-Based Alarms

85 percent of all fatal fires occur in someone's residence. That's approximately 2,650 people losing their life as the result of a fire in their home, according to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA).

Smoke alarms have been proven to increase the chances of survival by giving the residents additional time to get out of the house. However, many residents do not have the appropriate number of working smoke alarms in their house which leave them under protected. The NFPA and IAFC recommends that homes have a smoke alarm on each floor, in hallways and inside of all sleeping areas.

There are two types of smoke alarm technologies currently available to homeowners: **ionization** and **photoelectric**. The IAFC, along with virtually every other recognized fire authority including the NFPA, recommends the installation of both ionization and photoelectric technology to maximize protection from either flaming or smoldering fires. For more information, contact your local fire department.

Key Messages

• **Smart Choices for Smoke Alarm Placement**

Smart Choices for Smoke Alarm Placement is a new IAFC program that provides fire departments educational materials and other useful resources to help inform their communities about the importance of having a sufficient number of working smoke alarms in homes, how smoke alarm technologies work and the proper placement of the alarms.

Most fatal fires occur in the home

- **85 percent** of all fatal fires occur in the home (NFPA)
- Approximately **2,650 Americans** die each year in home fires (NFPA)

More working smoke alarms in the home increases the chances of surviving a fire

- On average, families have **less than three minutes** from the time the first smoke alarm sounds to escape a fire. The sooner an alarm is heard, the more time there is to respond.
- It is important that both smoldering and flaming fires are detected as quickly as possible. Both photoelectric and ionization smoke alarms meet NFPA 72 code and a combination of the two technologies is optimal.

For more information, visit www.SmartAlarmChoices.com

- The most important thing is to ensure that there are working UL-listed smoke alarms on every floor of the home, in hallways, in living areas, inside bedrooms and outside of sleeping areas.

Residents without a sufficient number of working smoke alarms are under protected.

- More than 84 million homes – most built prior to 1993 – only have isolated battery- or electric-powered smoke alarms, and millions more do not have an alarm inside of bedrooms.

Install at least one smoke alarm on each level or story of a multi-story dwelling, inside and outside of sleeping areas, in hallways, and living/kitchen areas.

- When installing smoke alarms, always refer to the manufacturer’s instructions in the owner’s manual.

Smoke alarms should be in every bedroom or just outside the bedroom in the hallway

- More than half (55 percent) of all home fire fatalities occur in the bedroom. (USFA)
- More than a third (35 percent) of the victims were asleep at the time of the fire. (USFA)
- Placing smoke alarms in bedrooms as well as in hallways could increase a family’s escape time by up to 15 minutes. (NIST)
- Half of all home fire fatalities occur between the hours of 10 p.m. and 6 a.m., when most people are asleep. (NFPA)

Cooking is the leading cause of home fires and injuries in the United States

- Cooking-related fires are the third leading cause of home fire deaths. (NFPA)
- Install smoke alarms at least 20 feet from cooking appliances to prevent nuisance alarms.

Smoking is the leading cause of home fire fatalities

- Most fatal smoking-related fires begin in the family room or den.
- Typically, abandoned or carelessly discarded smoking materials ignite trash, bedding or upholstery.

Smoke alarms do not last forever

- Smoke alarms should be replaced every 10 years and be tested monthly.
- Replace alarm batteries at least once a year or when the alarm signals (“chirps”) the end of the battery life. Follow manufacturer’s instructions if you have a 10-year smoke alarm which uses a long-life lithium battery.