



## SMOKE ALARMS SAVE LIVES

Smoke alarms play a vital role in reducing deaths and injuries from fire and have contributed to the almost 50% decrease in fire deaths since the late 1970's. It is estimated that 95% of U.S. homes have at least one smoke alarm. 65% of reported home fire deaths occurred in homes with no smoke alarms or no working smoke alarms. Properly installed and maintained smoke alarms save lives and protect against injury and loss due to fire.

### **Facts and Figures**

- A 2004 U.S. telephone survey found that 96% of the households surveyed had at least one smoke alarm, yet in 2000-2004, no smoke alarms were present or non operated in almost half (46%) of the reported home fires.
- An estimated 890 lives could be saved each year if all homes had working smoke alarms.
- 65% of reported home fire deaths in 2000-2004 resulted from fires in homes with no smoke alarms or no working smoke alarms.
- The fire death rate in homes with working smoke alarms is 51% less than the rate for homes without this protection.
- In one out of every five homes equipped with at least one smoke alarm installed, not a single one was working.
- Why do smoke alarms fail? Most often because of missing, disconnected or dead batteries. Nuisance activations were the leading cause of disabled smoke alarms.

### **Safety Tips**

- Install smoke alarms on every level of your home making sure that there is an alarm outside every separate sleeping area. New homes are required to have a smoke alarm in every sleeping room and all smoke alarms must be interconnected. In areas of the county where you would have a basement, install a smoke alarm there as well.
- If you sleep with bedroom doors closed, have a qualified electrician install interconnected smoke alarms in each room so that when one alarm sounds, they all sound.
- If you, or someone in your home is deaf or hard of hearing, consider installing an alarm that combines flashing lights, vibration and/or sound.
- If you have ceilings that are pitched, install the alarm near the ceilings highest point.
- Never paint smoke alarms and do not install near windows, doors, or ducts where drafts might interfere with their operation.

- Test your smoke alarm once a month and replace the batteries in your smoke alarm at a minimum of once every year. Best practice is to change the battery two times a year when the time changes.
- If your smoke alarm is “chirping”, it is time for a new battery.
- Never borrow the battery from the smoke alarm and never disconnect the battery.
- Regularly vacuuming or dusting your smoke alarm is required for proper maintenance.
- Smoke alarms should be replaced every 10 years.
- Plan regular fire drills setting off the smoke alarm so everyone knows exactly what to do when they hear their smoke alarm sounding.