

## Important Information about Smoke Detectors

Most home fire deaths happen in the middle of the night between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. A smoke detector can save your life by waking you and giving you time to escape. When purchasing a smoke alarm, look for one that is accepted by an independent testing facility such as Underwriters Laboratories or Factory Mutual.

## Location, Testing & Maintenance

### **The best place for your smoke alarms:**

- On every level of your home, including the basement and workshop
- Outside every bedroom
- On the ceiling or on the wall, 6 to 12 inches below the ceiling
- Away from air vents

Check the alarm batteries once a month by pressing the test button with your finger. The batteries should be replaced once a year.

You should clean the alarm by following the manufacturer's instructions. The grillwork on the detector should be vacuumed periodically to keep it dust-free.

## Installing Your Smoke Detector

Your smoke detector should be positioned in your house ideally on the ceiling, or on the wall, between 4 and 6 inches away from the ceiling-wall intersection.

### **Install your smoke detector:**

- On the ceiling, at least 6 inches away from the wall. A fire can often trap pockets of air where the wall and the ceiling meet - smoke might never reach the smoke detector in this dead air space
- 20 feet away from sources of combustion particles (stoves, furnace, water heater)
- Away from the kitchen (a smoke detector too close to the kitchen might frequently signal false alarms)
- 10 feet away from bathrooms or other damp, humid areas (the steam can often set off false alarms)
- In areas where the temperature is between 40 degrees Fahrenheit and 100 degrees Fahrenheit (colder or warmer temperatures, like the temperatures in an attic, might set off false alarms and also shorten the life of the smoke detector's battery)
- 3 feet from the highest point of the ceiling if the ceilings are sloped, peaked, or gabled

- Where the manufacturer recommends its placement (read the instructions to be sure that you are placing the unit in the absolute best location)

**Do not install your smoke detector:**

- In dusty, dirty, or greasy areas
- Near air vents, ceiling fans, or other drafty areas (drafts can blow the smoke away from the smoke detector, preventing the smoke detector from sounding)

## Preventing Nuisance Alarms

To prevent false alarms, move the detector away from a kitchen or bathroom. You may also want to consider purchasing a smoke alarm, like a photoelectric, that's less sensitive to common causes of false alarms. Some smoke alarms also are equipped with a silencing feature, so that nuisance alarms can be stopped quickly and easily.

To learn more, visit the [GSFR Smoke Detector page](#).