

## Smoke Detectors

In a time of panic if a fire should occur in the home or office, a smoke detector provides the best protection against injury. It is estimated that 75-percent of older Americans who perished in fires did not have a working smoke alarm in their home, or the smoke alarm was inoperable due to dead or missing batteries. Do not allow yourself to become a part of this statistic. Make yourself knowledgeable about smoke detectors and be prepared.

### SAFETY TIPS:

- Choose only detectors that are tested and rated by Underwriters Laboratories (UL).
- Look for units with hinged covers that will not close without a battery in place. Also choose units that can be tested with a flashlight to make testing safer and easier.
- Locate detectors on each level of your home and especially on the hallway ceiling near the air vents.
- Maintain units by testing batteries monthly and replacing weak ones immediately with new and tested batteries. Replace all batteries at least once a year. If in doubt, replace a detector.
- Vacuum the grillwork of your detector at least once a year. Cobwebs and dust can impair a detector's sensitivity.
- Two questions that should be asked are:
- When was the last time the smoke detector was checked and confirmed to be in operating condition?
- Does everyone in the household know what to do if the smoke detector alarm sounds?
- Never paint a smoke detector.
- If you sleep with your bedroom doors closed, it is a good idea to also install an alarm inside the bedroom.
- Smoke rises, so mount the alarm high on a wall or on the ceiling.
- Change the batteries at least once a year. If your alarm begins making a "chirping" sound, replace immediately.
- Adults who are deaf or hard of hearing should invest in visual aids such as alarms with strobe lights. Flashing or vibrating smoke alarms should also be tested every month.

### FACTS AND FIGURES:

- Smoke detectors provide the best protection against injury if a fire should occur in the home or office.
- Three characteristics of fatal house fires emphasize the importance of their early detection: they often start during the early morning hours when people are asleep, they frequently burn for a long time before being discovered; and more deaths are due to smoke inhalation and carbon monoxide poisoning rather than from burns.
- Use of effective detecting and alerting systems is estimated to reduce the number of fire-related deaths and injuries by at least 50%.
- FREE smoke alarms for seniors!! If you are over the age of 55, own your own home, and do not have a working smoke alarm, you qualify for a FREE smoke alarm through the Burn Institute's Senior Smoke Alarm Program. Please call the Burn Institute at (858) 541-2277 to receive your FREE smoke alarm installation.