Smoke Alarms Save Lives

The majority of fatal home fires happen at night, and the smell of smoke won't always wake you up. In fact, smoke and poisonous gases can put you into a deeper sleep.
Home smoke alarms can wake you in time to escape - cutting your chances of dying nearly in half. Smoke alarms are inexpensive; they do save lives, and in most states, are required by law in private homes.

We Can Help
Residents who live in Forsyth County outside of Winston-Salem may obtain Free Smoke Detectors and installation by contacting the Forsyth County Fire Department Monday - Friday from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm at (336) 703-2550. The Forsyth County Fire and Rescue Association sponsors the Smoke Detector Program which is designed to provide residents with smoke detectors and assist in the installation. Your local Fire Department will contact you and make an appointment for installation.

Choose an Alarm
Be sure that the smoke alarm you buy carries the label of an independent testing lab. Some home smoke alarms run on batteries, others on household current, and various models use differing fire-sensor technologies. But all approved (labeled) smoke alarms will protect you.

How Many and Where
Install a smoke alarm on every floor of your home, including the basement, and outside each sleeping area - inside as well if you sleep with the doors closed. Alarms should also be in or near dens, living rooms, family rooms, and other living areas.
Be sure everyone sleeping in your home can hear your smoke alarms, even with appliances on such as air conditioning. If someone in your home is hearing-impaired, you can install louder alarms or alarms that flash a bright light as well as sound an alarm.
The National Fire Alarm Code prohibits the installation of smoke alarms in locations such as attics and other unheated spaces where ambient conditions are outside the limits specified by the manufacturer. Smoke detectors should not be located where cooking fumes, steam, or automobile exhaust might set off false alarms.

Where to Install
Smoke rises, so alarms are required to be mounted high on a wall or on the ceiling. Position wall-mounted alarms with the top of the alarm 4 to 12 inches from the ceiling. Position ceiling-mounted alarms at least 4 inches away from the nearest wall. In a room with a pitched ceiling, mount the alarm at or near the ceiling's highest point.
In stairways with no doors at the top or bottom, install alarms anywhere along the path that smoke would travel up the stairs. But always position smoke alarms at the bottom of closed stairways. Dead air trapped near the door at the top of a stairway could prevent smoke from reaching an alarm located at the top.

Don't install a smoke alarm too near a window, door, or forced-air register where drafts could interfere with its operation.

Maintenance
Never borrow a smoke-alarm battery.
Test all your alarms monthly by pushing the "test button" and install new batteries at least once a year - when you set the clocks back in the fall, for example - or when your alarm is "chirping" to indicate that the battery is low.

Unless manufacturer's instructions say otherwise, vacuum your smoke alarms regularly without removing the cover.

Never paint a smoke alarm.

Smoke alarms don't last forever. Replace any smoke alarm that is more than 10 years old.