

For a complete list of fire and carbon monoxide safety recommendations, visit [www.firesafehome.org](http://www.firesafehome.org). This Web site is sponsored by the Residential Fire Safety Institute and its members:

Alliance for the Polyurethanes Industry  
American Fire Sprinkler Association  
Noveon (formerly BF Goodrich)  
Copper Development Association  
National Association of State Fire Marshals  
National Electrical Manufacturers Association  
Polyurethane Foam Association  
Sleep Products Safety Council  
United States Fire Administration  
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NEMA and its Signaling, Protection and Communication Section are the principle source of technical, training and educational information essential for the specification and manufacture of reliable life safety products, their installation, performance, maintenance and inspection. Section members include:

Air Products and Controls Inc.  
Apollo Fire Detectors Ltd.  
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SimplexGrinnell LP  
System Sensor/Honeywell Fire Solutions Group  
Therm Technology/Family Safety Products  
Vision Fire & Security  
Wheelock Inc.

For more information on smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, contact the National Electrical Manufacturers Association at (703) 841-3201 or [www.NEMA.org/prod/elec/sig](http://www.NEMA.org/prod/elec/sig).



## Is Your Home's Fire Safety Up To Date?



**You've upgraded your computer.**

**You've traded in your car.**

**You've improved your home entertainment equipment.**

**What have you done about your home safety systems?**



You've seen the benefits of new technology everywhere, from wireless phones to high-speed Internet. You may even think you have all the technology you need.

But have you thought about updating the protection systems in your home?

Products and best practices have changed in the last few years. Here's how to make sure your family has the protection they deserve.

## Smoke Alarms

Test alarms regularly and replace batteries annually. Now, newer models take the hassle out of that job. They feature long life batteries, sometimes in a sealed unit, so for these newer models you need not replace the batteries. At the end of the useful life, just replace the whole unit.

Smoke alarms should be replaced either when they don't respond to the test button or every ten years, whichever comes first. If your home was built more than ten years ago, it may be time to install new alarms.

In fact, the older your home, the more important your fire protection. According to a study by the Consumer Product Safety Commission, as your home's wiring ages, it presents an increasing fire risk. (See the article "What Causes Wiring Fires in Residences?" at the CPSC website at <http://www.cpsc.gov/LIBRARY/FOIA/FOIA04/os/firejournal.pdf>.)

New research from the National Institute of Standards and Technology shows that you may have less time to get out alive than previously thought. Since the last

comprehensive tests were conducted thirty years ago, anticipated time available to escape from flaming fires has dropped from 17 minutes to 3 minutes. (Full report is available at <http://smokealarm.nist.gov/>.)

That's why multiple, interconnected smoke alarms are so important. If one goes off, they all sound, giving you the earliest possible warning, no matter where in the house a fire starts.

The most up-to-date recommendations for new home construction from the National Fire Protection Association call for:

- A smoke alarm on every level of the home
- A smoke alarm in every bedroom
- Smoke alarms wired into the electrical system, interconnected, with battery backup

## Other fire safety products and practices

Once the alarm has sounded to get your family out of the house, a sprinkler system can help extinguish the blaze. Products to protect your kitchen include a fire extinguisher and a range-hood fire suppression system.

In addition to an up-to-date fire detection system, the Residential Fire Safety Institute, a not-for-profit consortium funded by the U.S. Fire Administration and other donors, recommends that you:

- Have an escape plan and practice it.
- Never smoke in bed.
- Never leave candles unattended.

## Carbon Monoxide Alarms

Carbon monoxide is a tasteless, odorless, colorless gas that comes from burning fossil fuels like gas, oil, and charcoal. Symptoms are similar to the flu (headache, nausea, drowsiness), so a special alarm is the only way to know when this deadly gas is present.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission recommends that every home have a carbon monoxide alarm. Since the introduction of the first battery-operated alarms more than ten years ago, four states and more than twenty municipalities have enacted regulations to require carbon monoxide protection in the home. (See [www.firesafefhome.org](http://www.firesafefhome.org) for a complete list.)

The National Fire Protection Association recommends the alarm be located "outside each separate sleeping area in the vicinity of the bedrooms."

Unlike smoke alarms, carbon monoxide alarms do not have to be installed high on a wall or ceiling. Available in wired-in, battery-operated, or plug-in models, they should be installed according to the manufacturer instructions, and replaced regularly as recommended by the manufacturer.

## Other carbon monoxide safety practices

Just as fire safety practices are critical, so are safe carbon monoxide habits. They include:

- Inspect furnaces and other fuel burning appliances annually.
- Never run a car in a garage, even with the door open.
- Never use a portable gas generator indoors, in a garage, or near the house.

