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# Working smoke alarms save lives



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**BUYING AND LOOKING AFTER  
YOUR ALARM – THE BASICS**

# **SMOKE ALARM MAINTENANCE**

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**There are two simple things we can all do to protect ourselves from fire:**

- Fit smoke alarms in our homes.
- Test our smoke alarms once a week to make sure the batteries are working.



***Your safety depends on smoke alarms that work!***

*Make weekly testing part of your household routine.*

**Is your home currently without a smoke alarm?**

Standard battery alarms cost as little as £5 and are available to buy in most high street stores, supermarkets, DIY and electrical shops. Batteries will need to be checked once a week and replaced every year.

**Could your smoke alarm be over 10 years old?**

After 10 years it's best to replace smoke alarms with completely new units.



## Fitting your smoke alarm

- Avoid fitting alarms too near cooking areas or bathrooms, where smoke or steam can set them off accidentally. Good places to fit alarms are at the top of the staircase, hallways, corridors or landings – where you can hear them throughout your home.



## Looking after your alarm

- Press the test button and hold it until the alarm sounds. If it doesn't sound you need to replace the battery. If you can't reach the test button – a simple tip is to use a broom handle.

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- Fitting and testing your smoke alarm is vital, but take care. Don't be tempted to have a go yourself if you're at all unsteady or unsure.

If you don't have family or friends living near by, you can get help fitting alarms from the Community Fire Safety Officer at your local Fire and Rescue Service. Your local GP or Health Visitor will also be able to give you information on safety in the home.



**Remember** – beeping alarms can be a reminder to change the battery.

## Are you likely to forget to test your alarm?

Smoke alarms with 10-year batteries are a good choice. These are available from many DIY and electrical stores. You could also consider mains-powered alarms. These will need to be installed by a qualified electrician. **Remember** – all smoke alarms need regular testing to ensure they are working properly.

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## Has your hearing deteriorated since fitting your smoke alarm or are you a deep sleeper?

Smoke alarms with vibrating pads and flashing lights could be right for you. The pad is placed under a mattress or pillow. When smoke is detected the alarm will sound and set off the light and pad – waking you up instantly.

Contact the Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID) Information line on **0808 808 0123**.

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Further advice on fire safety, including Braille leaflets and audio tapes, is available from your local Fire and Rescue Service. The number is in your local phone book.



Published by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. ©Crown copyright 2003.  
Printed in the UK, September 2003.  
Product code: Fire Alarms 03eld

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