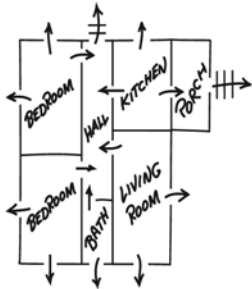


Develop a home fire escape plan today... It could save your life tonight!

If a fire occurred in your home tonight, would your family get out safely? Everyone must know what to do and where to go when the smoke alarm sounds. Take a few minutes with everyone in your household to make a home fire escape plan, following the instructions below.



1. Draw a floor plan of your home



Use the grid on the back to draw a floor plan of your home. You should draw a plan for each level of your home.

2. Include all possible emergency exits

Draw in all the doors, windows and stairways. This will show you and your family all possible escape routes at a glance. Include any features, such as the roof of a garage or porch, that would help in your escape.

3. Show two ways out of every room, if possible.

The door will be the main exit from each room. However, if the door is blocked by smoke or fire, identify an alternate escape route, which could be a window. Make sure that all windows can open easily and that everyone knows how to escape through them to safety. If windows have security bars, equip them with quick-releasing devices.

4. Does anyone need help to escape?

Decide in advance who will assist the very young, older adults or people with disabilities in your household. A few minutes of planning will save valuable seconds in a real emergency.



5. Choose a meeting place outside

Choose a meeting place a safe distance from your home that everyone will remember. A tree, street light or a neighbour's home are all good choices. In case of fire, everyone will go directly to this meeting place so they can be accounted for.

6. Call the fire department from outside your home

Don't waste valuable seconds calling the fire department from inside your home. Once you have safely escaped, call the fire department from a cell phone or a neighbour's home.

7. Practice your escape

Review the plan with everyone in your household. Walk through the escape routes for each room with the entire family. Use this walk-through exercise to check your escape routes, making sure all exits are practical and easy to use. Then hold a fire drill twice a year and time how long it takes. In a real fire, you must react without hesitation as your escape routes may be quickly blocked by smoke or flames.

Remember:

- *Plan two ways out of every room, if possible*
- *Hold a fire drill twice a year*
- *Install smoke alarms on every storey of your home and outside all sleeping areas*

If you live in a high-rise apartment building, contact the building management for information on your building's fire safety plan.

Facts about smoke alarms

Install Smoke Alarms: It's the Law!

The Ontario Fire Code requires that every home have working smoke alarms on every storey and outside all sleeping areas.

1 Smoke alarms save lives

Most fatal fires occur at night when people are asleep. Often, victims never wake up. A working smoke alarm will detect smoke and sound an alarm, giving everyone precious time to escape.

2 Buying the right alarm

There are several types of smoke alarms with different features and applications. Alarms can be electrically connected, battery powered or a combination of both. Many alarms have a pause feature, which temporarily silences the alarm. For information about the best type of alarm for your home, contact your fire department.

3 Where to install smoke alarms

Smoke alarms must be installed on each storey of the home as well as outside sleeping areas. Because smoke rises, alarms should be installed on the ceiling. If this is not possible, place them high up on a wall, according to manufacturer's instructions. Avoid placing alarms near bathrooms, heating appliances, windows, or close to ceiling fans.

4 Test smoke alarms monthly

Every month, test your smoke alarms, using the alarm test button.



Install alarms on every storey



Test smoke alarms monthly



Heed the advice and save lives

5 Change the batteries once a year

If the low battery warning sounds, replace the battery immediately. Install a new battery of the proper type once a year, or as recommended by the manufacturer.

6 Gently vacuum annually

Dust can clog a smoke alarm, so carefully vacuum the inside of a battery powered unit using the soft bristle brush. If electrically connected, shut off the power and vacuum the outside vents only. Restore power and test the unit when finished.

7 Smoke alarms don't last forever

All smoke alarms do wear out, so if your alarms are more than 10 years old, replace them with new ones.

8 Plan your escape

Make sure that everyone knows the sound of the smoke alarm and what to do when it activates. Create an escape plan and practice it with the entire household. Once outside, call the fire department from a neighbour's home. Never re-enter a burning building.

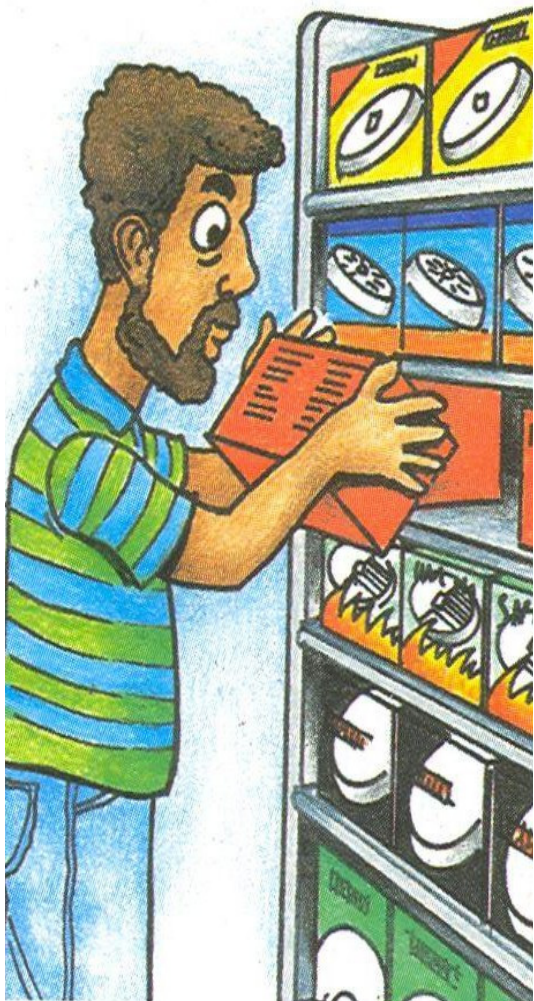
Managing Nuisance Alarms



A *nuisance alarm* is when a smoke alarm accidentally activates, generally due to cooking activities or steam from the shower. Unfortunately, people often respond to nuisance alarms by removing the battery from the alarm or shutting off the circuit breaker. This is a very bad idea. Not only is it against the law, it may leave your home and your family at serious risk if a fire occurs. Fortunately, there are some very effective ways to address the problem of nuisance alarms. Follow the suggestions below until you find the ones that work for you.

Tips to combat the problem

The most common cause of nuisance alarms is cooking. Therefore, the first step is to minimize the problem at the source by keeping ovens and burners clean, and by turning down the timer setting on toasters. Using the fan on the range hood when cooking can also help to remove combustion particles from the air. If this fails to produce the desired results, there are other solutions to consider.



Shop smart: Find out what type of alarms suit your needs and the best areas of your home to install them to conquer nuisance alarms forever.

Install smoke alarms with a pause feature

For anyone experiencing nuisance alarms, a smoke alarm with a “pause” or “hush” feature is a must. These alarms have a button which, when pressed, silences the unit for several minutes. The alarm will then re-set itself automatically. It is highly recommended that any new smoke alarms purchased include this feature.

Move the alarm

Sometimes the solution to frequent nuisance alarms is as simple as moving the alarm to a different location. If at all possible, avoid having a smoke alarm in the cooking area. Moving an alarm from the kitchen to the hallway could solve your problem. Another option is to move the alarm from the ceiling to the wall. The alarm should be installed no less than 10 cm and no more than 30 cm from the ceiling and should be located away from corners.

Try Alternative Technology

Smoke alarms commonly use one of two technologies to detect smoke: ionization or photoelectric. By understanding how each works you can make a more informed decision as to what suits your needs.

- *Ionization-type smoke alarms* have a small amount of radioactive material that ionizes the air between two electrically charged plates, causing a measurable current to flow between the plates. When smoke enters the chamber, it disrupts the flow of current, which activates the alarm. Ionization alarms respond slightly faster to flaming-type fires.
- *Photoelectric-type alarms* work by aiming a light source into a sensing chamber at an angle away from the sensor. Smoke entering the chamber reflects light onto the sensor which triggers the alarm. Photoelectric alarms respond slightly faster to smoldering-type fires.

Note: It is generally recommended that any alarms installed near the kitchen be of the photoelectric-type.

In approximately 50 per cent of preventable* home fire situations there is no smoke alarm warning.

*A preventable fire is any fire that was not intentionally set.

Keeping Safe from the “Silent Killer”

The following information is provided by the Technical Standards and Safety Authority (TSSA). For more information about carbon monoxide safety, visit their website at www.tssa.org, or contact your fire department.

What is Carbon Monoxide?

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colourless, odourless, tasteless and toxic gas and is often referred to as the “silent killer”. When inhaled it inhibits the blood’s capacity to transport oxygen throughout the body. It can poison the body quickly in high concentrations, or slowly over long periods of time.

What are the symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning?

Exposure to CO can cause flu-like symptoms such as headaches, nausea, dizziness, burning eyes, confusion, drowsiness or loss of consciousness. In severe cases, CO poisoning can cause brain damage and death. The elderly, children and people with heart or respiratory conditions may be particularly sensitive to CO.

How is carbon monoxide generated in the home?

Carbon monoxide is a by-product of incomplete combustion of fuels such as natural gas, propane, heating oil, kerosene, coal, charcoal, gasoline or wood. This incomplete combustion can occur in any device that depends on burning for energy or heat, such as furnaces, room heaters, fireplaces, hot water heaters, stoves or grills and any gas-powered vehicle or engine. Automobiles left running in attached garages, gas barbecues operated inside the house, grills or kerosene heaters that are not properly vented, or chimneys or vents that are dirty or plugged may create unsafe levels of CO.

When properly **installed, maintained** and **vented**, any CO produced by these devices will not stay inside the home.

What are some danger signs?

- You or other members of your family have symptoms of CO exposure (see above).

- You notice a sharp, penetrating odour or smell of gas when your furnace or other fuel-burning equipment turns on.
- The air is stale or stuffy.
- The pilot light of your furnace or other fuel-burning equipment goes out.
- Chalky white powder forms on the chimney/exhaust vent pipe or soot build-up occurs around the exhaust vent.

How can unsafe levels of carbon monoxide be detected?

Carbon monoxide alarms monitor airborne concentration levels (parts per million) of carbon monoxide and sound an audible alarm when harmful CO levels are present.

Be sure that your alarm has been certified to the Canadian Standards Association CAN/CGA 6.19 standard or the Underwriters Laboratories (UL) 2034 standard.

If you suspect carbon monoxide in your home...

If you or anyone in your home is experiencing the symptoms of CO poisoning, ensure that everyone leaves the home immediately, leaving the door open. Call your local fire department or 911 from a neighbour’s telephone. If your CO alarm sounds, do NOT assume it to be a false alarm. Open all doors and windows to ventilate the home. If you cannot find the problem and the alarm continues, contact the fire department. If there is a strong smell of natural gas in your home, evacuate immediately, leaving the door open, and contact your local gas utility.

If no symptoms are experienced, reset the alarm and check to see if it activates. If the alarm sounds a second time, call the local fire department for their assistance.

If the alarm does not sound a second time, check for common conditions that may have caused a CO build-up (see the accompanying illustration) or contact a qualified heating contractor to check your fuel-burning equipment.

Where should a CO alarm be located in the home?

Proper placement of a CO alarm is important. In general, the human body is most vulnerable to the effects of CO during sleeping hours, so an alarm should be located in or as near as possible to the sleeping area of the home.

If only one alarm is being installed, it should be located near the sleeping area, where it can wake you if you are asleep.

Where sleeping areas are located in separate parts of the home, an alarm should be provided for each area.

Additional CO alarms should be placed on each level of a residence and in other rooms where combustion devices are located (such as in a room that contains a solid fuel-fired appliance, gas clothes dryer or natural gas furnace), or adjacent to potential sources of CO (such as in a teenager’s room or granny suite located adjacent to an attached garage).

Unlike smoke, which rises to the ceiling, CO mixes with air. Recognizing this, a CO alarm should be located at knee-height (which is about the same as prone sleeping height). Due to the possibility of

tampering or damage by pets, children, vacuum cleaners and the like, it may be located up to chest height. To work properly, a CO alarm should not be blocked by furniture, draperies or other obstructions to normal air flow.

If a combination smoke/carbon monoxide alarm is used, it should be located on the ceiling, to ensure that it will detect smoke effectively.

Always refer to the manufacturer’s instructions for additional information regarding proper installation, use and maintenance.

To keep safe, please remember:

- You have a responsibility to know about the dangers of carbon monoxide. Your knowledge and actions may save lives.
- CO alarms are a good second line of defence, but do not eliminate the need for regular inspection, maintenance and safe use of fuel-burning equipment.
- Take the time to learn about the use of CO alarms in your home to ensure you are using this equipment properly and effectively.

