



Midlothian Fire Department – Fire Prevention Bureau

Stephen Hotwagner

Fire Chief

Michael Lonkar

Fire Prevention Officer

Residential Smoke/Heat Detectors

2/1/2021

For more information, contact:

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Fire Prevention Officer

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Midlothian Fire Department would like to remind residents about smoke alarm requirements and recommendations

February 1, 2021 – Are there smoke alarms installed in all your home’s bedrooms? If the answer is “no,” then your home doesn’t meet the updated requirements for smoke alarm installation. The Office of the Illinois State Fire Marshall requires smoke alarms within 15 feet every bedroom and on every level of the home, including the basement, but not ***unoccupied*** attics.

Some homes in Midlothian may not have smoke alarms near sleeping areas. The Midlothian Fire Department wants all residents to understand that state codes require smoke alarms within 15’ of all bedrooms and on January 1, 2023 they will all need to have 10 year batteries!

Smoke alarms can mean the difference between life and death in a fire. According to the nonprofit National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), working smoke alarms cut the chance of dying in a fire in half. Meanwhile, roughly two-thirds of all home fire deaths result from fires in homes with no smoke alarms or no *working* smoke alarms.

Essentially, there are two different types of smoke alarms: ionization and photoelectric. An ionization alarm is typically more responsive to a flaming fire, such as a pan fire. A photoelectric alarm is typically more responsive to a smoldering fire, as might occur where a lighted cigarette is dropped on a sofa. Combination smoke alarms have ionization *and* photoelectric capabilities. In accordance with NFPA, the Midlothian Fire Department recommends installing either combination alarms, or both types of alarms, near bedrooms, as well as throughout the home. Whatever type of smoke alarms you choose, make sure they are listed by a qualified testing laboratory.

Interconnected smoke alarms offer the best protection; when one sounds, they all do. A licensed electrician can install hard-wired multiple-station alarms, or homeowners can



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install wireless alarms, which manufacturers have more recently begun producing. This is particularly important in larger or multi-story homes, where the sound from distant smoke alarms may be reduced to the point that it may not be loud enough to provide proper warning, especially for sleeping individuals.

Smoke alarms detect and alert people to fire in its early stages, giving people the time needed to escape safely. That's why it's so important for every home to have them in all required locations, including bedrooms.

The Midlothian Fire Department offers the following tips for making sure the smoke alarms in your home are maintained and working properly:

- Install smoke alarms within 15 feet of every bedroom and on every level of the home.
- Test smoke alarms at least once a month using the test button, and make sure everyone in your home knows their sound.
- If an alarm “chirps,” warning the battery is low, replace the battery right away.
- Replace all smoke alarms, including alarms that use 10-year batteries and/ or hard-wired alarms, when they're ten years old or sooner if they do not respond properly when tested.

Midlothian residents with questions and/or concerns about the updated smoke alarm requirements may contact the Midlothian Fire Department at (708) 489-4742 and ask for the Fire Prevention Officer, Michael Lonkar. You can also visit the websites listed below for more information!

NFPA - www.nfpa.org/smokealarms

The Office of the Illinois State Fire Marshall - www.sfm.illinois.gov

The Village of Midlothian - www.villageofmidlothian.net under our municipal codes section.

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