



## Why bother fitting a smoke alarm?

Because you're 3 times more likely to die in a house fire if you don't have a working smoke alarm.

Because most people who die in house fires don't have a working smoke alarm.

**Did you know that there are around 63,000 house fires in the UK every year? That around 500 people are killed every year? And that another 14,000 people are injured?**

If you have a fire in your home, a smoke alarm will buy you valuable time. Time to put your escape plan into action. Time to get your family to safety.

Modern smoke alarms are neat and unobtrusive. They cost around £5 to £8. You don't need to be a DIY expert to fit one. You do need to fit a battery. And every week you do need to make sure the alarm is working.

# Isn't your family's life worth £5?



Visit [www.dontgivefireahome.com](http://www.dontgivefireahome.com) for practical fire safety advice. Or talk to your local firefighters. You'll find contact details on the website, in your local library and in the phone book.

Your local firefighters will also know of groups that can give advice and help in supplying and fitting safety equipment for older people, and people with disabilities and other special needs.

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## Where should I fit a smoke alarm?

If your home is on one level – a flat or bungalow – fix it to the ceiling in the hallway, between the living room and bedrooms. For extra safety, fit alarms in the bedrooms.

Don't fix it on walls or shelves. Don't fit it too near the kitchen door – smoke alarms can be set off by steam and cooking fumes.

If your home has more than one floor, fit one alarm at the bottom of the stairs and another on each upstairs landing.

## Fitting your smoke alarm

Fit an alarm within 7 metres (22 feet) of the living room door and 3 metres (9 feet) of a bedroom door. It should be at least 300mm (12 inches) from any wall, light or heating/air-conditioning vent.

Test the alarm to check that you can hear it all through the house. If you can't hear it, move it or buy more alarms.

## Testing your smoke alarm

Around 1 in every 5 smoke alarms fail to work because they don't have a battery, or because the battery is flat.

Test your smoke alarm every week. If the alarm doesn't work, fit a new battery. If it still doesn't work, buy a new alarm.

If your alarm is beeping from time to time, change the battery. Change the battery once a year, even if it's still working. Do it on a day you'll always remember. Another birthday, another battery. New Year, new battery. Keep a spare battery handy.

Clean your smoke alarm. Gently vacuum the inside and outside casing once a year, when you change the battery.

And remember that smoke alarms don't last for ever. You'll need a new one every 10 years.

## Special needs

There are special alarms for older people, and for people with disabilities and other special needs:

- mains powered smoke alarms that have back-up batteries
- vibrating pads and/or flashing lights that warn people with hearing impairments.

Always fit a smoke alarm in the bedroom of a person who smokes in bed, or who uses an electric blanket.

And people who may need assistance in escaping in a fire must have some means of calling for help. Systems include:

- a buzzer or intercom
- a telephone with an automatically dialled emergency number
- a private or local authority assistance alert scheme.

