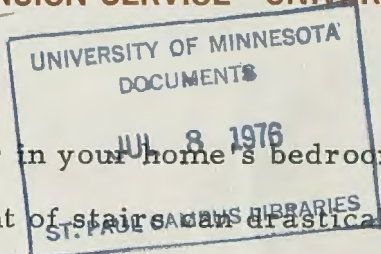


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Smoke Detectors

(1:20)



(612) 373-0710

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consumer radio briefs

A smoke detector in your home's bedroom area and another at the top of every flight of stairs can drastically reduce chances of having a nighttime home fire fatality.

University of Minnesota extension safety specialist Robert Aherin recommends smoke detectors rather than those that are triggered by heat. Smoke detectors respond to a broad spectrum of fires in time to sound an alarm. You need a minimum of two minutes to rouse yourself and other occupants to get out of the house. Aherin says properly installed warning devices can assure you of these life-saving minutes.

Smoke detectors using household current are convenient because they don't have to be checked for worn-out batteries. Only about ten percent of dwelling fires also involve power outages. Battery-operated detectors have the advantage of not needing nearby electrical outlets or unsightly power cords.

Aherin advises consumers to shop for detectors bearing the Underwriter Laboratory label or seal of approval and to test them regularly. Units should be kept free from dust, cobwebs and insects and battery-operated detectors should have their power cells replaced as soon as the signal indicates the necessity.

Smoke detectors that use photoelectric sensors also have bulbs that must be changed periodically to insure proper operation.

The Minnesota Building Code Division maintains an up-to-date list of approved smoke detectors. Copies are available from: Minnesota Building Code Division, 408 Metro Square Building, 7th and Robert Streets, St. Paul, MN 55101.

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