



Ten-year Life of Smoke Alarms

Fire Marshal's Office
East Hampton CT

Working smoke alarms detect and alert people to fire in its early stages, providing the warning needed to escape safely. According to the nonprofit National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), *working* smoke alarms cut the risk of dying in reported home fires in half. However, smoke alarms don't work forever.

As Fire Marshal of East Hampton, I'm concerned that the presence of smoke alarms in East Hampton residents' homes (most U.S. homes have at least one) may give them a false sense of security. Oftentimes, people don't know how old their smoke alarms are, if they're still functioning properly, or at all. That lack of awareness can have deadly consequences: nearly two-thirds of all home fire deaths result from fires in homes with no smoke alarms or no *working* smoke alarms.

Smoke alarms more than 10 years old no longer offer a reliable level of safety. The Fire Marshal Office of East Hampton urges all East Hampton residents to determine how old their smoke alarms are. (The date of manufacture is located on the back of the alarm.) If they're 10 years old or older, replace them immediately! This includes smoke alarms that use 10-year batteries and/or are hard-wired.

In accordance with NFPA, Fire Marshal Office of East Hampton offers the following recommendations for buying and installing smoke alarms:

- Purchase combination smoke alarms or both ionization and photoelectric alarms.
- For ease of use purchase smoke detectors that have a 10-year battery.
- Make sure smoke alarms are listed by a qualified testing laboratory.
- Install smoke alarms in every bedroom, outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home, including the basement. (Some older homes may not have smoke alarms installed in bedrooms, but it's important that these locations include them to provide adequate warning.)

Time and time again, the East Hampton Fire Marshal Office has witnessed the life-saving impact of smoke alarms. But we also know tragedy can result from smoke alarms that aren't working properly. We strongly encourage all East Hampton residents to inspect their smoke alarms today, and to replace them, if necessary, as soon as possible.

If you have questions or concerns about your smoke alarms and/or smoke alarm installation, please contact The East Hampton Fire Marshal Office at 860-267-0088, or visit www.nfpa.org/smokealarms for more information.

