

# SMOKE ALARM INFORMATION SHEET

KANSAS STATE FIRE MARSHAL  
2009

## HOW MANY DO YOU NEED?

At a minimum the Kansas State Fire Marshal requires that every single-family residence must have at least one smoke detector on every story of the residence, including the basement. This is mandated through Kansas Statute 31-160 and is referenced as the "Smoke Detector Act".

Additionally, the Kansas State Fire Marshal recommends that households install smoke alarms in every sleeping room or immediately outside every sleeping area.

## INSTALLATION GUIDANCE

The most ideal installation of smoke alarms would be an interconnected system of alarms. This means that when one smoke alarm activates – all alarms will sound. This provides early warning in situations where a fire starts in an area of the house that is remote from where you are located. Interconnected systems used to be available by contractor installation only; however wireless interconnected systems are now sold in most large retail stores.

If interconnected alarms are not an option, you can always select a good battery operated smoke alarm. These alarms can be hard-wired into your household electrical system or remain battery operated only. If you choose to hard-wire your alarm, make sure you keep the battery installed as a back-up for coverage during power outages.

When selecting the best location for your smoke alarms remember that smoke rises! The best placement is high on walls or on the ceiling. Use the following distances as a guide:

For Ceiling Mounts: 4 inches from wall

For Wall Mounts: 12 inches from ceiling

Other tips: Avoid windows, doors, air ducts or other drafty areas. If you have pitched ceilings place the alarm at the highest point.



VARIOUS SMOKE ALARM OPTIONS

## IONIZATION VS. PHOTOELECTRIC

There are two common types of smoke alarms: ionizations & Photoelectric.

Ionization alarms are generally more responsive to "flaming" fires whereas photoelectric alarms are more responsive to "smoldering" fires.

To avoid getting technical; just know that the two alarms detect smoke very differently and even though both alarms will provide sufficient time for escape from most fire situations, it is recommended that households would be best protected if both types are installed.

## MAINTENANCE & TESTING SCHEDULE

- Test all smoke alarms every month by pressing the test button that is typically found on the front of the unit.
- Replace smoke alarm batteries every 6 months. The Kansas State Fire Marshal encourages everyone to change your batteries when you change your clocks for daylight savings.
- Replace the smoke alarm every 10 years.