

# **Everything You Need To Know About Detectors**

Working alarms save lives – in the event of a fire you are at least six times more likely to die if there is no working smoke or carbon-monoxide alarm.

We are regularly reminded to replace the batteries in our alarms when we “spring forward” the clocks, in other parts they use April fools, so we thought this might be a good time to remind everyone to do so and provide you with a little more information on Detectors.

Effective March 1, 2006 The Ontario Fire Code was updated to require every home to have a working smoke alarm on every storey and outside all sleeping areas. As of October 15, 2014 a further amendment to the Ontario Fire Code required that carbon monoxide detectors be installed near all sleeping areas in residential homes and in the service rooms, and adjacent sleeping areas in multi-residential units. This means your home should currently comply with both of these requirements.

## **Smoke Alarms**

Did you know there are several types of smoke detectors? The most common is the ionization type which detects the smaller smoke particles from flaming fires. There is also a photoelectric detector which responds more quickly to the larger smoke particles of a smouldering fire (a must in smokers’ homes) and now there are dual detectors, able to detect both smoke particles.

Today’s models also come with different features such as a talking alarm, emergency light for escape, and lower sensitivity smoke detectors for kitchens so that burnt toast doesn’t wake up your loved ones and neighbour.

As per the regulations in the Ontario Fire Code you must have one installed on the ceiling on every floor of your home and specifically outside sleeping areas. If you are a smoker or enjoy candles, you should also install one in your bedroom.

Here are some tips to ensure that they is installed in the correct location. Avoid installing it closer than 18 inches from the wall as that is a rather dead-air zone, near bathrooms due to the humidity factor, or near windows or ceiling fans. –

## **Carbon-Monoxide Alarms**

As is the case with smoke detectors, you want your CO detectors to wake you during the night if something goes wrong. This means that the most important place is near your bedrooms as well as near solid fuel burning sources such as a fireplace.

It is important to ensure that you install your CO detector at the proper height. While some guides might recommend placing your CO detectors on the ceiling, I don't agree.

The specific gravity of Carbon Monoxide is 0.9657 (with normal air being 1.0), so it is lighter than regular air. However, when a buildup of dangerous levels of CO gas is taking place, this is nearly always due to a heat source that is not burning its fuel correctly (motor vehicle exhaust fumes are an exception). The heated air will form a layer near your ceiling which can prevent the carbon monoxide from reaching a ceiling detector, which is why I suggest that it is best to mount your CO detector on the wall at least a few feet below the ceiling.

Places to avoid are within 15 feet of gas appliances or near heating furnaces, fireplaces, and bathrooms. Also avoid placing them in direct sunlight or behind curtains or structures that restrict air movement.

## **Additional Information**

Note that the detection chambers of both smoke alarms and carbon-monoxide alarms degrade over time so units **MUST** be replaced every 10 years. Keep this in mind and note the expiration date on your units so you know when it is time to replace them.

Today's Building Code requires that all new homes have both types of alarms installed and hardwired together so when one goes off all alarms in the house sound ensuring that you are alerted. This provides for maximum safety. If you would like that level of security for your home, you can call an electrician and have this done. In our older homes you may just want to install a few extra alarms. After all it's a small price to pay for peace of mind and possibly saving your life.

If you wish your alarms tested or replaced, or you wish to add a few more, feel free to call My Go-2-Guy. We'd be pleased to assist with this important job!

**By: The My Go-2-Guy Crew**