

## **WILL YOUR SMOKE DETECTOR GIVE YOU ENOUGH TIME TO ESCAPE A FIRE?**

Not all smoke detectors are created equal, and the type of alarm installed in most homes may not provide adequate warning in the event of the most common type of house fire.

There are two types of smoke detectors most common in homes - ionization smoke detectors and photoelectric smoke detectors. Ionization detectors work best during a fast burning fire; however, they may be seriously delayed - up to 30 minutes - during a slow burning fire. This possible delay has been associated with fatal fires.

Photoelectric smoke detectors work well in smoldering fires, which is the most common type of home fire. They are slower to respond to fast burning fires, however this delay is only a matter of a few minutes.

*An NBC News report regarding the potential delay of ionization smoke detectors from alerting occupants to a smoldering fire is available at <https://youtu.be/cUJBugbvO3M>.*

Ionization smoke detectors are installed in 90% of homes. The National Fire Protection Agency and the smoke alarm manufacturer's recommends installing both photoelectric and ionization smoke alarms throughout your home, or smoke detectors with dual-sensors that use both technologies.

*Visit [www.iafc.org/about-iafc/positions/position/home-smoke-alarms](http://www.iafc.org/about-iafc/positions/position/home-smoke-alarms) for the International Association of Fire Chiefs' position about Home Smoke Alarms.*

Several other factors may contribute to serious fires. Cooking is the leading cause of fires. Smoking and heating equipment are also common causes.

The West Dundee Fire Department would like to remind residents that all smoke detectors must be properly placed and in good working order, and to replace detectors at the manufacturer's age requirements; no smoke detector should be older than ten years.

Every household should have a fire prevention and escape plan that includes the following considerations:

- Identify two ways out of all rooms and the quickest ways to get out of the house.
- Once you get out, stay out.
- Designate a pre-determined meeting place a safe distance from your home.
- "Close Before You Doze" - Keep bedroom doors closed while sleeping to slow the spread of smoke and flames to sleeping rooms. For more information, visit [www.closeyourdoor.org](http://www.closeyourdoor.org).
- Install both photoelectric and ionization smoke alarms, or dual-sensors smoke alarms, as well as carbon monoxide (CO) detectors throughout your home. Consider interconnected smoke detectors (hard-wired or wireless) for each level of your home, so all alarms sound at once.
- Install smoke and CO detectors within 15' of sleeping rooms, inside all sleeping rooms and on every level of your home, including the basement.
- Test your smoke detectors monthly. Change batteries annually, unless you have a smoke detector with a 10 year battery.
- Replace aged smoke detectors. No smoke detector should be more than 10 years old.
- Do not disable smoke detectors.

*For more information about proper installation of smoke detectors, visit <https://www.nfpa.org/Public-Education/By-topic/Smoke-alarms/Installing-and-maintaining-smoke-alarms>.*

**Should you have any questions, please contact West Dundee Fire Prevention Officer Rick Paul at 847-551-3805.**