



Installing and Maintaining Smoke Alarms

LESSON OBJECTIVE: Help students understand how to install and maintain smoke and CO alarms so they can guide customers through a purchase.

ESTIMATED COMPLETION TIME: Approximately 5 minutes for the video. Use the Summary section if you wish to review the main points in the video. Use the Additional Discussion section to spend more time on this topic.

HOW TO USE: View the video. If you wish to spend additional time, use the discussion guide below.

SUMMARY OF POINTS FROM THE VIDEO:

- Recommend homeowners have a smoke alarm on every level of the home, including near sleeping areas and near the kitchen. Also always check local codes to see what is recommended for your area.
- Maintain smoke alarms by testing them once a month. Change batteries twice a year.
- Replace smoke alarms every 10 years. You can check to see if it needs replacing by referring to the date of manufacture on the back of the alarm.
- Some newer models have a sealed lithium ion battery that will not need changed. The entire unit is replaced every 10 years.
- There are three basic types of smoke alarms. Ionization alarms respond best to flaming fires like cooking fires. Photoelectric alarms respond best to smoldering fires like furniture fires. Dual alarms combine both types.
- Recommend placing a carbon monoxide (CO) alarm near the basement. Test it once a month and replace the batteries twice a year.
- Homeowners should learn to recognize the different signals made by a smoke alarm and a CO alarm.

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION:

- Discuss the types of smoke and CO alarms you carry in your store. There may be newer models that combine smoke and CO detection in one alarm.
- Find out what are the local codes or recommendations for placement of smoke alarms in your area and share these with your employees.
- Are there any other questions customers frequently ask when purchasing smoke alarms?

ADDITIONAL TRAINING: View the Trainer's Toolbox lesson in "Basic Fire Safety at Home" for additional information on helping customers learn about fire safety. Take NHPA's Basic Training in Hardware Retailing, Hardware Department to learn more about home safety products.