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## Know Your Devices

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Did you know there are two types of smoke alarms?

- Photoelectric
- Ionization

A *photoelectric alarm* is more responsive to a smoldering, smoky fire while an *ionization alarm* is more responsive to a flaming fire. The United States Fire Administration recommends that homes are equipped with a) both photoelectric and ionization smoke alarms, or b) dual sensor smoke alarms.

Areas of a house which are susceptible to “nuisance tripping” (near bathrooms and/or kitchens) are generally advised to install photoelectric alarms.

Check with your local Fire Marshal for a list of approved wireless interconnected systems.

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## Maintain Your Devices

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- Test the device monthly
- Replace the batteries annually (unless “long-life” or lithium battery)
- Replace the entire device every 10 years (Carbon monoxide alarms should be replaced every 7 years)



**Smoke and  
Carbon Monoxide Detection  
Save Lives!**

It is the responsibility of the building owner to install and maintain an operable system of smoke and carbon monoxide detection. The installation requirements vary depending on the building’s age, so make sure to research the applicable regulations.

State and Local Fire Officials are available to conduct inspections or advise as to installation specifications.

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For More Information:

**Rhode Island Office of the State Fire Marshal**  
560 Jefferson Blvd, Warwick RI 02886  
(401) 889-5555  
<http://fire-marshal.ri.gov>

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# Smoke & Carbon Monoxide Detection

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## In One & Two Family Dwellings

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*Timothy P. McLaughlin*  
**State Fire Marshal**

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## Installation Requirements

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### Homes built in 1976 or prior:

- Smoke alarms shall be installed outside sleeping areas and on each level (including basements)
- Carbon monoxide alarms shall be installed outside sleeping areas
- Devices may be battery operated and are not required to be interconnected

### Homes built on 1/1/1977 through 12/21/2001:

- Smoke alarms shall be installed outside sleeping areas and on each level (including basements)
- Carbon monoxide alarms shall be installed outside sleeping areas
- Smoke alarms shall be hard-wired with battery back-up and interconnected
- Carbon monoxide alarms may be battery operated and are not required to be interconnected

### Homes built on 1/1/2002 through 02/19/2004:

- Smoke alarms shall be installed outside sleeping areas and on each level (including basements)
- Carbon monoxide alarms shall be installed outside sleeping areas
- Devices shall be hard-wired with battery back-up and interconnected

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## Installation Requirements Cont.

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### Homes built on 2/20/2004 through 12/31/2012:

- Smoke alarms shall be installed inside each bedroom and on each level (including basements)
- Carbon monoxide alarms shall be installed outside sleeping areas and on each level (including basements)
- Devices shall be hard-wired with battery back-up and interconnected

### Homes built on 1/1/2013 to present:

- Smoke alarms shall be installed in all sleeping rooms, outside all sleeping areas and on each level (including basements)
- Carbon monoxide alarms shall be installed outside sleeping areas and on each level (including basements)
- Devices shall be hard-wired with battery back-up and interconnected



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## Device Installation Instructions

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- *Ceiling mounted:* Anywhere on the ceiling  
*Wall mounted:* 12 inches from the top of the detector to the ceiling.  
*Peaked or sloped ceilings:* Within 36 inches of the peak or high side of the slope, but no closer than 4 inches vertically or from an adjoining wall surface.
- Devices shall not be installed within 36 inches of heating or cooling registers, the tip of a ceiling paddle fan, a kitchen door or a bathroom door containing a tub or shower.
- Devices within a 20 foot horizontal path of a cooking appliance shall be equipped with an alarm-silencing means or be of the photo-electric type.
- Where stairs lead to other occupied levels, a smoke alarm shall be located so that smoke rising in the stairway cannot be pre-vented from reaching the smoke alarm by an intervening door or obstruction.
- For stairways leading up from a basement smoke alarms shall be located on the basement ceiling within 2 feet of the entry to the stairs.
- Smoke alarms should be placed near the first bedroom door in a hallway closest to the living area.
- All devices shall be installed per manufacturer's recommendations.