

Smoke detectors are essential for fire safety, providing early warnings that help people escape and limit property damage. Fires can start from electrical issues, equipment, or heating systems, making detectors important in all workplaces. Home fire risks are also common, often caused by cooking, heating, or electronics. Encouraging employees to use smoke detectors at home extends safety awareness beyond the workplace. Carbon monoxide detectors are equally vital, protecting against an invisible, odorless, and potentially deadly gas from fuel-burning appliances and vehicles. For complete protection, they should be installed in areas where people sleep and near any fuel-burning equipment. Follow the tips below to properly select, place, and use smoke detectors to help protect people and property:

1

Types of Smoke Detectors. Ionization smoke detectors react quickly to flaming fires, like those involving paper or grease, but may trigger more false alarms. Photoelectric smoke detectors use a light beam to detect smoke and are less prone to nuisance alarms, providing earlier warnings for smoldering fires.

2

Placement Recommendations. Smoke detectors should be placed in key areas such as break rooms, conference rooms, and near exits, while avoiding direct installation in kitchens to reduce false alarms. Detectors should be installed in areas with electrical equipment or machinery and at the highest point in spaces with ceilings over 10 feet.

3

Employee Awareness and Response. Employees should know how to respond when a smoke detector sounds: evacuate quickly, follow the facility's emergency plan, and never ignore or disable a detector. Report any malfunctioning detector immediately so it can be repaired or replaced, and never cover or disable a detector.

4

Best Practices. For optimal safety, it is recommended to use combination smoke detectors with both ionization and photoelectric sensors or separate units of each type. Batteries need to be tested weekly and replaced every six months. Smoke detectors should be replaced every 10 years or as recommended by the manufacturer.

5

Regulatory and Safety Resources. National standards guide the use of dual-sensor smoke detectors and proper placement in homes and buildings. To meet legal requirements and protect people who are deaf or hard of hearing, systems should include visual alerts (like flashing lights) and alarms that meet required sound levels. Additional resources are provided below.



LEARN MORE WITH THESE ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- Texas Department of Insurance: [Workplace Safety Videos](#)-Smoke Detectors
- [Installing and maintaining smoke alarms - NFPA](#)
- [U.S. Access Board - Home](#)
- U.S. Fire Administration (USFA): [Smoke Alarms](#)