

## Fire Safety Practices

- Install and maintain working smoke alarms or a smoke detection system
- A sprinkler system can help control a fire and provide additional escape time
- A hand-held fire extinguisher should be a part of any kitchen

### The Residential Fire Safety Institute recommends that you:

- Have an escape plan and practice it
- Never smoke in bed
- Never leave lit candles unattended
- Leave the building and call the fire department when an alarm sounds

## CO Safety Practices

- Inspect furnaces and other fuel-burning appliances annually
- Never leave a car running unattended in the garage, even with the door open
- Never use a portable gas generator indoors, in a garage, or near the house
- Should the alarm sound, leave the building and call the fire department

For a complete list of fire and CO safety recommendations, visit

[www.lifesafety-solutionsonline.com](http://www.lifesafety-solutionsonline.com)

NEMA and its Signaling, Protection and Communication Section are the principal source of technical, training and educational information essential for the specification and manufacture of reliable life safety products, their installation, performance, maintenance and inspection.

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Are the  
**Life Safety  
Products**  
in your home  
up-to-date?



You've **upgraded** your computer.

You've **upgraded** your car.

You've **upgraded** your home entertainment equipment.

## What have you done about the devices that protect your home and family?

You've experienced the benefits of new technology everywhere — from smart phones to HDTV. But have you thought about the life safety devices in your home? Like other technologies, life safety products are constantly changing and improving. This pamphlet includes some of the latest life safety guidelines and best practices that can help you provide your family the protection they deserve.



## Smoke Alarms and Smoke Detection Systems Combat Increased Risk

Research has shown that as your home's wiring ages, it presents an increasing fire risk.<sup>1</sup> In addition to this ever-increasing risk, new research from the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)<sup>2</sup> shows that the available safe egress time (ASET) has dropped dramatically over the last 30 years — from 17 minutes to 3 minutes. You and your family have significantly less time to escape from a fire.

### Guidelines and Best Practices

To combat decreasing escape times, a current best practice is to install multiple, interconnected smoke alarms. No matter the fire's location in the home, when one device activates, all connected devices alarm to give the earliest possible warning to occupants throughout the home. For larger homes that require more than 12 interconnected smoke alarms, or if the homeowner prefers a system that automatically notifies the fire department via a supervising station, a household fire alarm system using system smoke detectors and audible notification appliances is an option.

You should inspect and test alarms in accordance with the manufacturer's published instructions at least monthly. **Smoke alarms should be replaced every ten years or if they ever fail to respond to the test button.** (Some newer models feature batteries that last up to 10 years that do not need to be replaced annually. Replace these alarms when the end-of-life signal activates.) If your home was built more than ten years ago, it may be time to install new alarms.

### Current Requirements

The most up-to-date requirements for new home construction from the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) call for approved single- and multiple-station smoke alarms or system smoke detectors to be installed as follows:

- On every level of the home, including basements
- In every bedroom
- Outside each separate dwelling unit sleeping area, within 21 feet of any door to a sleeping room
- Do not install within 10 feet of a fixed cooking appliance. Use a photoelectric or ionization with a silencing button between 10 feet and 20 feet of a fixed cooking appliance
- Where required by other governing laws, codes, or standards



## Carbon Monoxide (CO) Alarms and Detection Systems Protect Against This "Silent Killer"

CO is a tasteless, odorless, and invisible gas that comes from burning fossil fuels like gas, oil, and charcoal. Symptoms of CO poisoning are similar to the flu (**headache, nausea, drowsiness**), so a special alarm is the only way to know when this deadly gas is present.

### Guidelines and Best Practices

CO is dangerous because common sources like fireplaces, water heaters, furnaces, vehicles, charcoal grills, lawnmowers, portable generators, and space heaters can be found in or near any home. As such, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) recommends that every home have a CO alarm.

### Current Requirements

The most up-to-date requirements for new home construction from the National Fire Protection Association call for approved single- or multiple-station CO alarms or system detectors to be installed on the wall, ceiling, or other location specified by the manufacturer's instructions as follows:

- Outside of each separate dwelling unit sleeping area in the immediate vicinity of the bedrooms
- On every occupiable level of a dwelling unit, including basements (not attics and crawl spaces)
- Other locations required by applicable laws, codes, or standards

<sup>1</sup> See "What Causes Wiring Fires in Residences?" at [www.cpsc.gov/LIBRARY/FOIA/FOIA04/os/firejournal.pdf](http://www.cpsc.gov/LIBRARY/FOIA/FOIA04/os/firejournal.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> View the full report at <http://smokealarm.nist.gov>