

Every smoke and CO alarm has an expiration date. What's yours?

Not sure? Keep reading! (Think you do? Keep reading anyway! Alarm technology and state code change, and you may be surprised.)

Do you have an alarm? Having just one functioning smoke alarm can reduce the risk of death in a home fire by nearly one half! And there are free resources in Dutchess County to equip your home accordingly.

How old is it? Smoke and CO alarms expire! An alarm unit, whether hard-wired or not, will not be effective after 10 years. If you are unsure of its age, check the backside of the alarm for a manufacturing date. If there is no manufacturing date, it is most likely older than 10 years and not functional.

Does it have a replaceable battery? New York State code now requires alarms to have a 10-year, sealed, non-removable battery if not hardwired to the home. This battery will last the life of the alarm, and cannot be replaced. This removes the burden of changing an alarm battery, and is a safer system. If you still have an alarm with removable batteries (like 9 volt, AA, or AAA batteries that you change) consider replacing them with 10-year sealed lithium alarms - there are free resources in Dutchess County to do replace and install these.

Where are your alarms? New York State code requires one smoke alarm on each story, one in each room used for sleeping purposes, and one in the immediate vicinity outside of each sleeping area. Not covered? You guessed it - there are free resources in Dutchess County to make sure you are.

What else can you do?

Fire extinguishers - How old is your fire extinguisher? After 5-6 years, all fire extinguishers require maintenance. Do you know where your fire extinguisher is? It is recommended to be placed in an exit path - never keep it too close to or obstructed by a fire hazard. Is its pressure gage in the operable range (green)? If not, the extinguisher is depressurized and will not function.

Reflective house numbers - Are your house numbers reflective? In an emergency situation, these can help responders identify the home more quickly, potentially saving life-saving time.

Fire escape plan - Do you have a fire escape plan? The American Red Cross recommends having a 2-minute plan, with 2 methods of exit and a single meeting place a safe distance from the home. Practice this drill twice per year.

In need of, or know of someone else in need of, 10-year sealed lithium smoke and CO alarms, a new fire extinguisher, or reflective house numbers? Please look into Rebuilding Together Dutchess County's Home Safety & Fire Prevention program or give us a call.

Rebuilding Together Dutchess County's Home Safety program installs/replaces smoke and CO detectors, fire extinguishers, and reflective house numbers, alongside providing fire safety and preparation education. The installation takes approximately one hour with a team of volunteers and is completely cost free to eligible homeowners in Dutchess County. To sign up, contact RTDC at (845)454-7310.



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