



Louie  
Delaware

The Home  
Safety Guru

## Over 90% of Smoke Detectors May Not Work Properly In a Fire

Everyone knows that smoke detectors save lives every day. And nearly everyone takes the time each year to change the batteries on these units. But unfortunately, most people don't know what else should be done with smoke detectors. But a smoke detector can only work properly if air and smoke can get to the sensing devices.

90% of the homes that are 10 years or older have smoke detectors that may not work properly in a fire. Smoke detectors are working 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year. Over 10 years, they have been operating nearly 90,000 hours continuously. The problem is that the components may not work properly or not be as sensitive due to aging.

### ANNUAL MAINTENANCE

- ◆ **Annual Battery Replacement** – Every autumn, you should change the batteries of your smoke detectors. Make certain you are using new batteries.
- ◆ **Cleaning** – When changing the batteries, while the cover is still open you should vacuum the detector to get rid of dust, spider webs and the like to allow air to flow to the detector easily.
- ◆ **Testing** – Before finishing the annual maintenance, push the test button (it is probably a good idea to let everyone in the home know you are doing this as to not scare them).
- ◆ **Home Alarm Systems** – If you have a home alarm system, you should consult with your monitoring company as to how to do your annual maintenance.

### REPLACEMENT

- ◆ **Every 10 Years** - The National Fire Protection Association suggests that smoke detectors should be replaced every 10 years. After this period of time, they may not be as sensitive as when new and may not actually sound an alarm during a fire.
- ◆ **Wired Interconnected Detectors** – Newer building codes required that if one smoke detector sounds an alarm, all of the detectors in the home will sound. These will give you the most notice that a fire may be occurring in your home. If you have these units, you need to make certain that all of the smoke detectors you will be using are made by the same manufacturer and same model, otherwise they may not work properly. As you will be handling 120 VAC wires, if you are not comfortable changing these yourself, hire an electrician or handyman.
- ◆ **Stand-Alone Detectors** – These are units that will only sound an alarm at the detector alone. You can replace these, but you may want to consider the next type.
- ◆ **Wireless Interconnected Detectors** – These work the same way as the wired interconnected ones do, but instead of being wired, they send to all other smoke detectors in a home a signal to sound their alarms as well. These are great for older homes where re-wiring for wired detectors would be very expensive. Consider having these on each level and in each room.
- ◆ **Marking Installation Date** – When replacing a detector, mark on the new unit the date the detector will need to be replaced (e.g., 10 years from date of manufacture, which should be listed on the detectors, otherwise, if you can't find this mark 10 years from the date of installation), preferably near the battery where you will see it every year.

The unfortunate thing of this is that people see a smoke detector and think that they are safeguarded in their homes. They need to do annual maintenance and replace all of them every 10 years.

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Louie Delaware, **The Home Safety Guru™**, president and founder of US Safety Pros, LLC is a Certified Child & Home Safety Professional in all aspects of home safety, from childproofing to home safety, radon testing &

Online press kit: [www.HomeSafetyGuru.presskit247.com](http://www.HomeSafetyGuru.presskit247.com)  
Media Contact: Michelle Tennant, 828-749-3200, [michelle@publicityresults.com](mailto:michelle@publicityresults.com)



mitigation along with fire, carbon monoxide and barrier free construction. US Safety Pros has helped safeguard over 700 homes. For more information about Louie Delaware, go to his web site, [www.HomeSafetyGuru.com](http://www.HomeSafetyGuru.com).

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