



Smoke Detector Handout for Apartments

Studies have shown that roughly one-fifth of the tens of millions of smoke alarms installed in homes or apartments are not in proper working condition. These poorly maintained units endanger occupants by creating a false sense of security.

More than half of all fatal fires strike when people are asleep. The sooner a sleeping person wakes up and reacts, the greater his or her chances are of surviving the fire. If you're asleep, the smell of smoke won't always wake you up. In fact, smoke and poisonous gases can put you into a deeper sleep. Smoke alarms can cut your risk of dying in a fire nearly in half. Most people who die in home fires don't die from the actual fire itself, but the smoke. Smoke alarms do save lives, and are required by law.

Maintenance of smoke detectors:

- **Test your smoke detector every month**, should your smoke detector not work properly report this to the apartment manager.
- **Never disable your smoke detector for any reason** (i.e. disconnecting the smoke detector, taking out the battery). Any person disabling the smoke detector in their dwelling or a smoke detector for the building fire alarm system can be charged for a misdemeanor. Disconnecting your smoke detector could be the last thing you do.
- **Test all your smoke detectors monthly**, by pushing the "test button".
- **Many battery-powered smoke detectors will "chirp" to warn you that their battery power is low.** If the smoke detector is "chirping" contact the apartment manager.
- **Never paint or put tape over any fire alarm device** (i.e. smoke detectors and horns).
- **Smoke detectors don't last forever.** Smoke detectors life span on average only last 10 years.
- **Batteries should be replaced every 6 months.** Change the time on your clocks change you batteries in your smoke detectors. Contact the apartment management for replacing the batteries.

Always be sure you understand why an alarm is sounding before treating the alarm is a nuisance. Take fire alarms seriously! If there is smoke or fire in your building get out and then call 911. Please help us keep everyone safe.

Any questions or concerns please feel free to call West Metro Fire-Rescue District Fire Prevention Office at 763 537 2323 extension 2003 or 2004.