

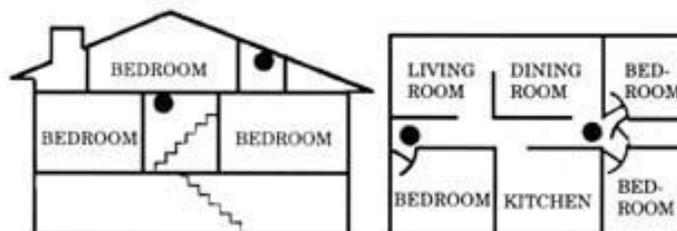
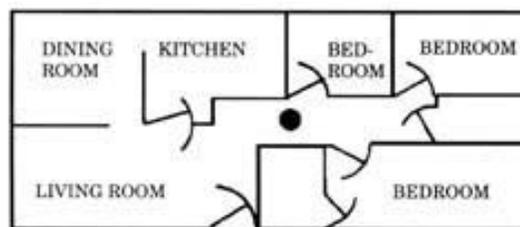
What Kind of Smoke Detector Should You Buy?

Each type of smoke detector, if properly installed and maintained, is effective. Since photoelectric detectors react more quickly to smoldering fires, while ionization units respond faster to flaming fires, you may want to buy at least one unit of each or a combination detector. However, because most home fires produce a mixture of smoke types with detectable amounts of large particle and small particle smoke early in the fire growth, either an ionization or a photoelectric detector will meet most needs.

Several new features are available in smoke detectors today. These include detectors that have an escape light, are portable, or transmit their alarm to a central console by radio signal as part of a unified emergency alert system. These can be used with burglar and other warning or detection devices. Electric current detectors with a rechargeable battery for power outages are also available.

How Many Do You Need?

There should be at least one smoke detector on every floor of the house. Tests conducted by the National Bureau of Standards have shown that two detectors, on different levels of a two-story home, are twice as likely to provide enough time for escape as one detector. Although the upstairs detector senses smoke wherever it originates, the downstairs unit will react sooner to a fire that could block escape routes on the first floor.



Having two detectors also allows you to select both an ionization type and a photoelectric model, giving you the best capabilities of both. In addition, it lets you select one battery-powered and one plug-in or wired-in model. Neither a battery failure nor a power outage will leave your family unprotected. Finally, two smoke detectors are far less likely to be inoperative at the same time as is possible with a lone detector.

Source

U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, What You Should Know About Smoke Detectors (January 1985).

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