

**Assemblymember
John T. McDonald III**



Dear Friend,

Smoke detectors can mean the difference between life and death. Every home in New York State is required to have a smoke detector.

Early warnings of fires save lives and reduce property damage. A properly installed and maintained smoke detector provides a vital early warning at a low cost.

Installing smoke detectors in your home can also lower your fire insurance costs.

This brochure answers questions about smoke detectors, how they can protect you and your family and about the state Smoke Detector Law.

Remember, having a smoke detector in your home is the law – a law that may save your life. If I can be of further help in this or any other matter, please call my office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John T. McDonald III".

John T. McDonald III
Member of Assembly

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Protect your family...

**Smoke detectors
save lives.**

Home Smoke Detector Law

It could save
your life.



Courtesy of...

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Time is crucial. When your smoke detector sounds, you may have only a minute or two to escape.
Develop and practice a home escape plan.



What does the law require?

Owners of one- and two-family residences must install and maintain a smoke detector that provides an audible alarm within each sleeping area. This gives sleeping residents an early warning of a night-time fire, which is most likely to go undetected and cause loss of life.

Can I install any type of detector?

Both battery- and electrically-operated devices are acceptable; however, you should be sure smoke detectors have been approved by a testing laboratory, such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL) or Factory Mutual (FM). Check the outside package to ensure that the detector is approved, and be sure to read the manufacturer's instructions before installing.

How many smoke detectors do I need?

This will depend on the number and location of sleeping areas in your home. The law only specifies that smoke detectors be installed so they can be clearly heard in each bedroom, or other rooms used for sleeping, with intervening doors closed. In homes with sleeping areas on different floors, a smoke detector should be on each floor adjacent to the sleeping quarters. If you need assistance in selecting locations or want advice on the proper installation of these devices, contact your local fire department or building inspector.

If your community has more stringent smoke detector laws, they would take the place of state law. To find out what the law is in your community, contact your local code enforcement officer.

How is the law enforced?

Fire officials or building and code inspectors can't demand entrance to your home. Instead, this law is enforced through such things as financial incentives and educational programs. Insurance companies regularly provide a 2 percent premium reduction if the structure has smoke detectors in it. The law allows a fine of not more than \$1,000 per day of violation, or imprisonment not exceeding one year, or both, against an owner failing to comply with an order to install smoke detectors.

Remember... only **working** smoke detectors save lives.

- ✓ **TEST** your smoke detectors at least once a month. Push the test button or blow smoke into the detector.
- ✓ **CLEAN** your detectors at least once a year to remove dust.
- ✓ **REPLACE** the battery every year. Better yet, twice a year – when you change your clocks in the spring and fall. Replace the smoke detector after 10 years.

Installation note

The ceiling is the best location for installing your detector, but detectors can also be mounted on the wall. Keep them at least four inches away from corners.

In wall-mounted installations, the bottom of the detector should be no more than 12 inches from the ceiling.

Added protection: Carbon monoxide alarms now required by law

Carbon monoxide, often associated with home fuel-burning equipment, is an odorless, colorless gas that can kill. State law requires carbon monoxide detectors in all dwellings (Ch. 367 of 2009). For additional information visit www.health.ny.gov and find "carbon monoxide" under the "A-Z Index." You can also visit www.dos.ny.gov/DCEA/ and type "carbon monoxide" in the search box. In addition, see the NYS Assembly's Carbon Monoxide brochure.