

Smoke Alarm

Smoke alarms have been installed in an estimated 93 percent of American homes, increase a person's chances of surviving a fire by 50 percent.

- **An estimated 374,900 residential building fires are reported to U.S. fire departments each year and cause an estimated 2,630 deaths, 13,075 injuries, and \$7.6 billion in property loss.**

Two-thirds of fire deaths occur in homes where smoke alarms are not installed, or where alarms are either improperly installed or not properly maintained. Fire officials recommend testing early warning alarms once a month and replacing batteries at least twice a year. City codes require smoke alarms on every level of your home, centrally located outside bedrooms; and require a smoke detector installed inside each bedroom.

Assistant Fire Chief and Fire Marshal, Jack Spurgeon Jr., who also serves as the department's Public Education Officer, warns about being complacent and careless about smoke detector installation and maintenance. Spurgeon says that the department's goal is for every Bristol family to have proper and full smoke alarm protection and offers the following tips:

- Test smoke alarms at least once a month using the test button, and make sure everyone in your home knows their sound.
- If an alarm "chirps," warning the battery is low, replace the battery right away.
- Replace all smoke alarms every ten years or sooner if they do not respond properly when tested. This includes detectors that use 10-year batteries and hard-wired.
- Never remove or disable a smoke alarm.