



# Coffee Break Training - Fire Prevention and Public Education

## Wireless Interconnected Smoke Alarms (Part 1 of 2)

No. FM-2013-9 August 22, 2013

**Learning Objective:** The student will learn information about wireless smoke alarms for older homes and rental housing.

Interconnected smoke alarms are an important part of home fire safety. In the event of fire, the interconnection activates the alert tone on all of the smoke alarms in a home. This alert tone greatly improves the chance of hearing an alarm if a fire starts in another area of the home from where you are. Unfortunately, very few homes more than 20 years old have wiring installed that interconnects the smoke alarms.

The safety and peace of mind that comes with an interconnected smoke alarm system can now be installed without the expense, mess or high labor costs needed to install wires between each smoke alarm. Wireless smoke alarms are available to fit almost any home. They are available in both battery powered and AC powered.

Wireless interconnected smoke alarms are easy to install and only involve a few simple steps.

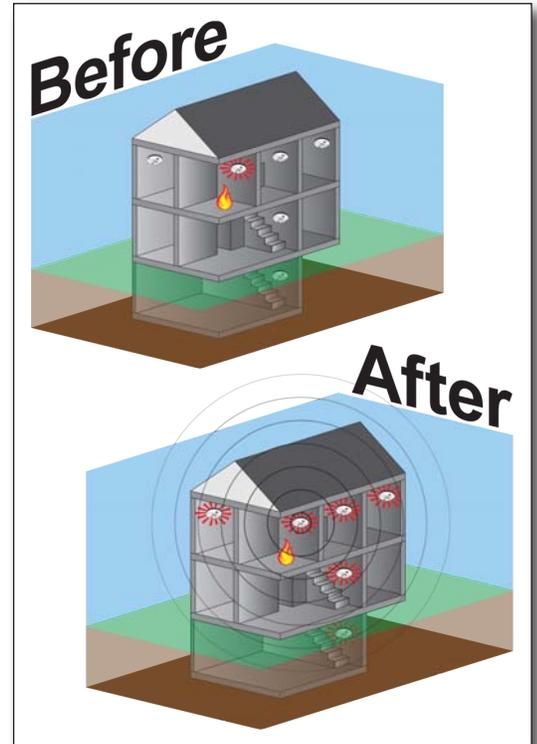
1. All home safety devices should be listed by a nationally recognized testing laboratory. The most well-known of these is Underwriters Laboratories (UL). Look for the familiar UL marking on the product and packaging to be sure that the product complies with safety standards.
2. All of the wireless interconnected smoke alarms in a home must be of the same make and model so they can communicate with one another. At present, the various models are not interchangeable.
3. Purchase enough smoke alarms so you can install at least one on every floor of the home, including the basement, one in each bedroom, and one in the hallway outside of each sleeping area.
4. It is very important to follow the manufacturer's instructions when installing any smoke alarm. There are a few special considerations that apply to wireless smoke alarms. These considerations are detailed in the owner's manual packaged with each smoke alarm. It is best to have a licensed electrician do the work if wiring is involved.
5. Any smoke alarm installed within 20 feet of a kitchen or cooking area must have a "silence" or "hush" button so nuisance alarms can be easily dismissed.
6. These smoke alarms have a 10-year life span and then need to be replaced; however, the batteries need to be replaced on an annual basis.

Please take the time to check with the local fire marshal or fire official to see if there are any local laws on smoke alarm installation.

Test your smoke alarms on a regular basis (at least monthly). Vacuum the dust off smoke alarms every six months.

Along with wireless interconnected smoke alarms, have a home fire escape plan for the entire family and include guests.

For more information about smoke alarms, visit <http://www.usfa.fema.gov/campaigns/smokealarms/alarms/index.shtm>.



A home before and after installation of a wireless interconnected smoke alarm system.

**For archived downloads, go to:**

[www.usfa.fema.gov/nfa/coffee-break/](http://www.usfa.fema.gov/nfa/coffee-break/)