Fire Prevention

Smoke Alarms

A working smoke alarm is one of the most valuable fire safety tools you can have in your home. Smoke alarms cut the risk of dying in a fire by 50%. However, in order to be effective, smoke alarms must be working and you must have a home escape plan. Many people believe that the smoke from a fire will wake them. Studies show that smoke, which contains carbon monoxide and other hazardous chemicals, actually causes a deeper sleep. If the occupant is awakened due to the smoke or other fire noises, the chances of escaping the structure are greatly decreased due to the time that has lapsed. Smoke alarms work by giving the earliest possible warning of a fire in your home.

Types of Alarms

There are a variety of smoke alarms available on the market today. Buy only alarms that are approved through Underwriters Laboratory (UL) or Factory Mutual (FM). Smoke alarms may be powered in different ways. Some may be hardwired into the electrical system of your home. Others take a 9 volt battery for power. Others come with a 10-year lithium battery that may not need to be changed. To get the best possible protection, be sure to read and follow the manufacturer's recommendations for installation, testing and maintenance.

Location of Smoke Alarms

Smoke alarms should be located outside every sleeping area and on each level of the home. If occupants sleep with their bedroom doors closed, it is recommended that one be placed in every bedroom, if possible. It is not recommended that smoke alarms be placed in the kitchen due to the possibility of false alarms. Smoke alarms are not designed for attic spaces that are unoccupied, due to the extreme temperatures and exposure to dust and humidity.

Installation

Because smoke rises, smoke alarms should be mounted high on a wall or on the ceiling. When mounting on the ceiling, they should be at least 4" from the wall. When mounting on the wall, they should be at least 4" down from the ceiling, but no more than 12" from the ceiling.

For more information about smoke alarms call the
Hall County Fire Marshal's Office at (770) 531-6838