



Colerain Township & Fire Department Letters

Urgent Message From Your Fire Department 2.

December 4, 2009

To: Condo and Apartments Association(s)

A smoke detector is a smoke detector. Right? 3.

January, 2010

To: Colerain Township Residents



Colerain Township

COLERAIN OF FIRE AND EMS

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December 4, 2009

To: The Condo and Apartment Association(s)

URGENT MESSAGE FROM YOUR FIRE DEPARTMENT

Fires are the fifth most common cause of unintentional death in the United States. The Colerain Township Fire Department considers smoke detectors to be one of the most important devices in the prevention of deaths and injured from fire. Smoke detectors are the first alert for the occupants(s) to be able to escape from a fire.

We are asking everyone to consider replacing their current Ionization Smoke Detector(s) with Photoelectric Detector(s). Studies have shown that Ionization Smoke Detectors have a failure rate over 55% of the time in smoldering fires. Studies have also shown a high fatality rate related to smoldering fires which are the most common type fire that occurs in the residences. The majority of smoke detectors that are installed are the ionization smoke detectors, but they did not activate in a timely manner, in some cases 30 minutes after the fire, where Photoelectric smoke detectors activate within seconds compared to minutes.

Question: How do I know if I have an Ionization or Photoelectric smoke detectors?

On the back of the detector look for the (P) symbol for Photoelectric. Ionization detectors will have the word(s) radioactive material with the (I) symbol or the word ionization

Please take the time to read the pamphlet that we have provided you and visit our website at www.colerainfire.com

As a reminder, smoke detectors should be replaced at least every 10 years, or according to the manufacturer's recommendations, and if they are battery operated, batteries should be replaced every six months.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to call us,

Sincerely,

Mark Walsh

Mark Walsh, Captain
Colerain Department of Fire and EMS
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A smoke detector is a smoke detector. Right?

Well, not exactly. That would be like saying all cars are the same. While all have the same basic design, tires, engine, transmission, designed to take us from point A to point B, cars can be drastically different from how they perform and under what conditions they perform.

While all smoke detectors are designed to give occupants early warning to a fire, allowing them precious time to escape, smoke detectors are activated by different forms of smoke and perform in different ways.

There are two types of smoke detectors on the market, an **Ionization** and a **Photoelectric**. They both detect smoke, but its the kind of smoke and their performance that have devastatingly different results. Results that can cost lives.

There are two scenarios to be aware of, the flaming fire and the smoldering fire. A flaming fire is more likely to occur in the kitchen while cooking. A smoldering fire is more likely to occur at any electrical outlet, any piece of lighting, any piece of power equipment or battery charger.

The Ionization smoke detector is designed to detect smoke that is produced from a flaming fire, that has extremely fine particles suspended in the air. The Photoelectric detector has been shown to outperform during a smoldering fire, that produces thick dense choking smoke.

During a flaming fire the Ionization detector goes off 10 seconds faster that the Photoelectric detector. Ok, 10 seconds head start is nice.....however, in a smoldering fire the Photoelectric detector can go off 12-30 minutes faster than the Ionization. That's minutes compared to seconds.

Did you know that in Hamilton County over 70% of the fire fatalities are directly due to smoke inhalation, death occurs before the heat and flames affect the person.

Did you also know that 75% of the fatalities occur in the homes and most of those fires occur during sleeping hours?

Did you also know that like cars, smoke detectors can break down? During a smoldering fire the **Ionization detectors fail 56%** of the time. The **Photoelectric detectors fail 4%** of the time. Which would you want to own, a car that breaks down 56% or 4% of the time? What about smoke detectors? Should you go with 56% or 4% failure rate? What is acceptable for the safety of your family?

How do you know what type smoke detector you have? Take the detector off the ceiling and look on the back. If its and Ionization detector it will have an I in a circle or the words "radioactive materials" printed on it. The Photoelectric will have the emblem of a P in a circle.

So, if you were in a car involved in a accident, would you want the airbag to go off immediately or would you be willing to wait 12-30 minutes after the accident for the airbag to deploy? If your in a house that is filling with smoke, do you want the detector to go off immediately or are you willing to wait 12-30 after the presence of smoke for the detector to go off?

Change your detector to a Photoelectric. Give your family the precious time that is needed to get out and stay out in the event of a fire. It's truly that simple and that serious.

Facts provided by:
National Fire Protection Agency
Texas A&M University
Hamilton County Coroners Office

