



Fire Prevention Division

City Hall Annex
315 Maple Avenue
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SMOKE DETECTOR INSPECTION PROGRAM

Smoke alarms are the residential fire safety success story of the past quarter century. Smoke alarm technology has been around since the 1960s. But the single-station, battery-powered smoke alarm we know today became available to consumers in the 1970s, and **since then, the home fire death rate has been reduced by half.** *Working smoke alarms are essential in every household.* Here are some important facts and figures regarding residential smoke detectors:

- Roughly half of home fire deaths result from fires in the small percentage of homes with no smoke alarms.
- Homes with smoke alarms (whether or not they are operational) typically have a death rate that is 40-50% less than the rate for homes without alarms.
- In one-quarter of the reported fires in homes equipped with smoke alarms, the devices did not work. Households with non-working smoke alarms now outnumber those with no smoke alarms.
- Why do smoke alarms fail? Most often because of missing, disconnected or dead batteries.

In an effort to help protect the citizens of South San Francisco, the South San Francisco Fire Department is now offering **Residential Smoke Detector Inspections** at no charge to single family residential properties **in South San Francisco**. The Fire Department has received a grant for 500 new smoke detectors and batteries which will be available free of charge (while supplies last). These new smoke detectors will be installed in conjunction with the new inspection program. Once the supply of smoke detectors has been exhausted, the free inspection and installation program will continue. However, the property owner will need to provide new smoke detectors for installation. The inspection and installation of these devices will continue to be free of charge.

Inspections are intended to help property owners ensure that all smoke detectors are functioning properly, installed to current codes/guidelines, and installed in required locations.

ATTENTION REALTORS: THIS SERVICE MAY NOT BE USED TO SATISFY THE SMOKE DETECTOR INSPECTION THAT IS REQUIRED PURSUANT TO SECTION 310.16.3 (a) OF THE CALIFORNIA BUILDING CODE AND SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO MUNICIPAL CODE ORDINANCE 1255.

IF YOU ARE SELLING OR TRANSFERING YOUR HOME, PLEASE CALL FIRE PREVENTION AT 650-829-6645 TO SCHEDULE THE REQUIRED SMOKE DETECTOR INSPECTION.

Follow these steps to schedule an inspection:

Call the South San Francisco Fire Department Smoke Detector Hotline at 650-829-4315 to schedule an inspection.

You will need to provide:

- The property address to be inspected.
- The number of detectors to be inspected/installed.

- Requested inspection time and date
- Contact Information for the individual who will be present at inspection (Name and phone number)*.
- Fire Personnel will contact you to set-up an inspection.

****Property residents will need to be present at time of inspection to provide access and to sign a release of liability waiver.***

At the time of your smoke detector inspection:

- Fire Personnel will inspect existing residential smoke detectors.
- Defective smoke detector batteries/detectors will be replaced as needed.
- Smoke detectors will be installed at bedrooms and corridors without smoke detector coverage.
- All detectors will be installed to current codes and manufacturers installation guidelines

For additional "Do-it-yourself" information, please see the attached pages for required smoke detector installation location guidelines in both Single Family and Multi-Unit Residential occupancies. The following tips have been provided for those homeowners that choose to inspect their own smoke alarms:

- Test your smoke alarms once a month, following the manufacturer's instructions.
- Replace the batteries in your smoke alarm once a year, or as soon as the alarm "chirps" warning that the battery is low. *Hint:* schedule battery replacements for the same day you change your clocks from daylight savings time to standard time in the fall.
- Never "borrow" a battery from a smoke alarm. Smoke alarms can't warn you of fire if their batteries are missing or have been disconnected.
- Don't disable smoke alarms even temporarily. If your smoke alarm is sounding "nuisance alarms," try relocating it farther from kitchens or bathrooms, where cooking fumes and steam can cause the alarm to sound.
- Regularly vacuuming or dusting your smoke alarms, following the manufacturer's instructions, can keep them working properly.
- Smoke alarms don't last forever. Replace yours once every 10 years. If you can't remember how old the alarm is, then it's probably time for a new one.
- Consider installing smoke alarms with "long-life" (10-year) batteries.
- Plan regular fire drills to ensure that everyone knows exactly what to do when the smoke alarm sounds. Hold a drill at night to make sure that sleeping family members awaken at the sound of the alarm. Some studies have shown that some children may not awaken to the sound of the smoke alarm. Know what your child will do before a fire occurs.
- If you are building a new home or remodeling your existing home, consider installing an automatic home fire sprinkler system. Sprinklers and smoke alarms together cut your risk of dying in a home fire 82 percent relative to having neither – a savings of thousands of lives a year. Click the link below for a printable Smoke Detector Program details and single family residence smoke detector installation tips.



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Single Family Home Smoke Detector Guidelines

California State law requires an operating smoke detector on every inhabitable level, including the basement.

- **15.08.050 Smoke Detectors.**

Section 310.16.3 (a). On or after January 1, 1986, every single-family dwelling and factory built housing, as defined in section 19971 of the Health and Safety Code, which is sold shall have an operable smoke detector. The detector shall be approved and listed by the state fire marshal and installed in accordance with section 310.9.1.4. A battery-operated smoke detector shall be deemed to satisfy the requirements of this section. **(Ord. 1255 2 (part), 1999) South San Francisco Municipal Code, Section 310.16.3 (a) California Building Code**

Required Locations

Smoke alarms must be installed properly in order to provide early warnings of fires:

- in every bedroom.
- in hallways outside of bedrooms.
- at the top of interior stairways.
- on each level if the dwelling has two or more levels (including basement).

Smoke detectors should not be located:

- near heaters or heater vents
- in or outside kitchens (avoid placement within 6 feet of the kitchen).
- directly outside bathroom doors (avoid placement within 6 feet of a bathroom door).

Dust, water vapor (steam), or cooking can cause false alarms. Smoke alarms shall not be located in areas where these materials are produced.

Mounting guidelines:

- Locate on a smooth flat surface (preferably on a ceiling or on the bottom of a beam).
- Smoke detectors mounted on the ceiling should not be installed closer than 4 inches to an adjoining wall.
- If the smoke detector must be installed on the wall, it shall be mounted within 4 to 12 inches of the ceiling.
- Install per the approved manufacturers instructions
- In unusual construction situations, consult a contractor.

