SMOKE DETECTORS

Print out this information for future reference.

We at Kilkenny County Council Fire & Rescue Service recommend and encourage you to install smoke alarms in your home today. Fit a smoke alarm. A smoke alarm can save your life. You can get one for under €15 from a DIY, electrical or hardware shop. Some garages and supermarkets also sell them.

Buy a smoke alarm that has the CE Mark and/or the British Standard Kitemark on it and ensure it conforms to Irish Standard 409 and/or British Standard 5446. Not all units are the same. The rule is to follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully. Smoke alarms are widely available. Most are simple and convenient to fit. If in doubt, call a qualified electrician or consult the supplier. Follow the instructions to fit it.

Fit a smoke alarm between the living areas and the bedrooms. Two smoke alarms, properly located (one on each floor) should suit the average home. Larger homes will obviously require more. Don't cut corners for the sake of a few euros. Position smoke alarms where they can be clearly heard from key position in your home e.g. from behind the closed door of a bedroom. Manufacturer's instructions will normally indicate the recommended locations.

Make sure you can hear it throughout your home, especially in the bedrooms.

Cooking, smoky ovens or cigarette fumes may trigger the smoke alarm when there is no real danger. However, don't ever assume that it is a false alarm. Always act immediately. Do a thorough check – it may save your life. Smoke alarms are a crucial linchpin of fire safety. They could save your life and the lives of your family.

Test your smoke alarm weekly

- Once a week test each alarm by pressing the test button till the alarm sounds.

- Once a year change the battery (unless it's a ten-year alarm).
- Twice a year open the case and gently vacuum the inside using the soft-brush attachment to remove dust from the sensors. If it doesn't open, vacuum through the holes.
- After 10 years it's best to get a whole new alarm.

Smoke alarms are only effective if they are in good working order. They should be tested once every week. Most units have a test button so that you can conveniently check that your alarm is operational. It is important that you and the people you live with are familiar with the alarm signal. If the alarm fails to sound, check the battery. If this is not the problem, check the manufacturer's instructions. If in any doubt purchase a new alarm. Most smoke alarms are battery powered. Long life batteries may last for years but regular checks are essential. Always replace batteries with the correct type and size.

Remember a smoke alarm is useless if it doesn't have a battery or the battery is flat.

You can get more information from the National Safety Council http://www.nsc.ie/ or via telephone on Locall: 1890 200 844

This checklist review has been compiled by Killian John Hennessy, Assistant Fire Officer, Kilkenny County Council Fire & Rescue Service.