

Sounds in the Night

Smoke Detectors

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Artwork by Rudi Franke

The “chirping” or “beeping” sounds of a smoke detector always seem to happen in the middle of the night. If you don’t have a ladder or can’t use one to change the batteries, you won’t be able to sleep and your pets will suffer anxiety and ear pain from the sounds.

You can prevent this from happening by replacing those batteries every year. Make a note on your calendar when you replaced them the last time and then mark your new calendar with the next replacement date. Or use the same scheduling method that you use for other tasks such as changing the furnace filter or having the garage door lubed. When it’s time to replace them, buy a new 9-volt battery for each alarm unit, then call Neighbors InDeed (NID) and we will change the batteries in all the units. Batteries should all have the same expiration date, otherwise they will expire at different times and will begin chirping. (You should also replace the battery in the carbon monoxide (CO) detector at the same time.)

Smoke and CO detectors have a 10-year life expectancy. Some experts recommend that we start thinking of replacements in the 8th year. If you’re not sure of the age of your alarms, ask NID to check them for you.

The California Building Code requires that smoke detectors be hard-wired with a battery backup and that CO detectors are required in homes with gas heating or appliances. NID recommends using a BRK First Alert (Model 9120B) smoke detector with an Alkaline battery backup or a BRK First Alert (Model 9120LBL) with a 10-year Lithium battery backup. Batteries are included in both models and they are available at Lowes and through Amazon. For a CO detector, NID recommends the First Alert plug-in type, also available at Lowes and Amazon. These units have a backup battery that also “chirps” when the battery needs changing. You can simply unplug them to change the battery - no ladder needed.

If you call NID (916-223-2763) to replace your smoke alarms, we will advise you of the options available and then install the new ones for you once they’ve been purchased.

*As always, please remember that we will never answer the phone. If you leave us a message at **916-223-2763**, we will return your call as promptly as possible between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.*