

# Borough of Chester Heights

## Smoke Alarms at Home

**SMOKE ALARMS ARE A KEY PART** of a home fire escape plan. When there is a fire, smoke spreads fast. Working smoke alarms give you early warning so you can get outside quickly.



### SAFETY TIPS

- Install smoke alarms in every bedroom. They should also be outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home. Install alarms in the basement.
- Large homes may need extra smoke alarms.
- It is best to use interconnected smoke alarms. When one smoke alarm sounds, they all sound.
- Test all smoke alarms at least once a month. Press the test button to be sure the alarm is working.
- Current alarms on the market employ different types of technology including multi-sensing, which could include smoke and carbon monoxide combined.
- Today's smoke alarms will be more technologically advanced to respond to a multitude of fire conditions, yet mitigate false alarms.
- A smoke alarm should be on the ceiling or high on a wall. Keep smoke alarms away from the kitchen to reduce false alarms. They should be at least 10 feet (3 meters) from the stove.
- People who are hard-of-hearing or deaf can use special alarms. These alarms have strobe lights and bed shakers.
- Replace all smoke alarms when they are 10 years old.

### FACTS

- ❗ A closed door may slow the spread of smoke, heat, and fire.
- ❗ Smoke alarms should be installed inside every sleeping room, outside each separate sleeping area, and on every level. Smoke alarms should be connected so when one sounds, they all sound. Most homes do not have this level of protection.
- ❗ Roughly 3 out of 5 fire deaths happen in homes with no smoke alarms or no working smoke alarms.



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PROTECTION ASSOCIATION**  
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**FIRE MARSHAL  
SAM IANNUCCI**  
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## OVERVIEW OF FIRE SAFETY INSPECTION CHECKLIST

1. **Smoke Detectors:** All smoke detectors will be tested using artificial smoke. Detectors over 10 years old are not allowed.

**Placement of Smoke Detectors:** Smoke detectors are required in all bedroom locations. Additionally, smoke detectors are required at a rate of one per floor per 1,200 sq. ft. (residential) / 800 sq. ft. (commercial). If the layout of the home is unusual, more may be required. If smoke detectors are hard-wired (110 volt), they must be replaced with the same type. No substitutions are allowed—a battery-operated unit cannot replace a hard-wired unit.

2. **CO Detectors:** CO detectors must be installed and operable on each floor of the dwelling.

3. **House Numbers:** Must be properly displayed and easily seen from the street. The numbers must be placed on the street side and be clearly visible.

4. **Storage of Flammable/Combustible Materials** (paints, solvents, cleaners, gasoline, etc.): Commercial properties must have metal storage lockers. Homeowners cannot store gasoline indoors. All home hazardous materials must be disposed of properly before resale.

5. **Egress and Door Exits:** Door exits with double cylinder locks are required, with emergency keys nearby. Panic hardware is required on all commercial exit doors. A small hook with the key is acceptable.

6. **Storage of Flammable Materials Close to House** (trash, building materials, LP gas tanks, etc.): Storage of propane tanks indoors is prohibited.

7. **Gates, Chains, and Other Methods of Restricting Access:** To roadways, driveways, or other vehicle paths must not impede emergency vehicles. Knox boxes are acceptable. Forms are available from the Fire Marshal's Office.

8. **Electrical Systems:** Must be properly installed with a UL (Underwriters Laboratories) sticker on the main breaker panel. No exposed wires or open boxes allowed. Proper grounding is required. Ground fault interrupters (GFI) are required within 6 feet of all water basins and wet/damp areas.

9. **Heating Systems / Fireplace Inspection:** A certificate from a certified business (present year service sticker) is required. Overview of exhaust exits from heaters—main, space, and water. Fuel hazards of natural gas, heating oil, and propane. Present year contract certificates or receipts are required to show preventative maintenance was performed on heaters and fireplaces. Cracks in prefabricated fireplaces with panels of fireboard or firebrick cannot exceed one sixteenth of an inch in width. Replacement is necessary when this condition exists. Wood and coal freestanding stoves require the same.

10. **Dryer Vents:** Must be rigid metal.

11. **Portable Fire Extinguishers** (Active Dates): Required in all rentals and commercial properties. Fire extinguishers must have the present year date on tags.

12. **Fire Alarm Signaling Systems:** A certificate of working order from a certified technician or business is required. Fire alarm systems must have a present-year certificate of good working order from their monitoring companies, where applicable.

13. **Automatic Sprinkler Systems:** For fire protection purposes with suitable water supply and sprinkler alarm system must have a certificate of good working order from a certified technician or business, where applicable.

**Note:** The above items are required for all property sale transactions, commercial, and residential rental units. The basis for all inspections is in accordance with, but not limited to, the Chester Heights Fire Code, the currently adopted International Fire Code, all NFPA codes, the International Building Code, and the UCC of PA.