



# R B F & R S

## news release

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### **SPRING CLEAN YOUR SMOKE ALARM THIS EASTER**

If you are planning to spend Easter weekend catching up on jobs around the house, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) is urging you to make spring cleaning your smoke alarm a top priority.

Statistics show that you are twice as likely to die in an accidental house fire if you don't have working smoke alarms<sup>1</sup>. Smoke alarms can be lifesavers in the event of a fire, giving you precious extra time to get out of the house – but they are useless if the battery is flat or missing.

Smoke alarms don't need much looking after, so keep you and your family safe by following this advice:

- **Once a week:** test the battery in the smoke alarm.
- **Once a year:** change the battery (unless it is a 10-year alarm).
- **Twice a year:** open the alarm case and gently vacuum inside to remove dust. If the alarm case doesn't open, vacuum over the slots. Never paint over a smoke alarm.
- **Every ten years:** replace the entire smoke alarm.

It's advisable to fit a smoke alarm on every level of your house. The best place to site them is at the bottom of the stairs, with further alarms on each stair landing. Always fit alarms on the ceiling, as near as possible to the centre of the room, hallway or landing, and at least 12 inches (30cm) away from any wall or light.

Jane Weller, Community Safety Officer at RBFRS, said: "Testing your smoke alarms only takes a few minutes - but it could end up saving your life. Just owning a smoke alarm and hoping it works is not enough to protect your home and loved ones. Fit one to every level of your home and test the batteries every week.

"Making an escape plan in advance and practising it with your family can also save lives in an emergency. For more fire safety advice, visit [www.rbfrs.co.uk](http://www.rbfrs.co.uk)"

**ENDS.**

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<sup>1</sup> Fire Statistics UK 2007