

SMOKE AND CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS

SMOKE DETECTORS

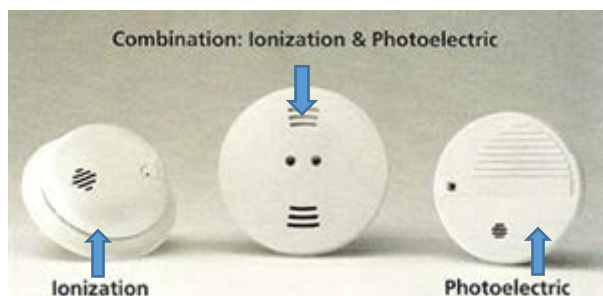
Smoke detectors are a vital component for your home and could save your life in a fire. While it may seem as if disposal of these devices should be easy, it is more complicated than you may think.

Common residential smoke detectors are available for purchase in different types of detection technology, ionization and photoelectric.

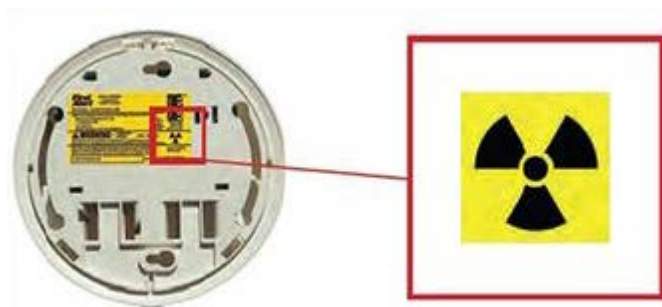
Ionization smoke detectors are generally more responsive to open flame fires and contain a very minute amount of radioactive material known as Americium-241 (AM-241).

Photoelectric-type smoke detectors do not contain any radioactive material and are generally more responsive to smoldering fires.

Dual Sensor smoke detectors use both ionization and photoelectric smoke detection technology.



In ionization type smoke detectors, the amount of radioactive material is very minute. If the detector contains radioactive material, it should have a warning label on the underbody of the detector. The label may be similar to the example below and/or have the international symbol for radiation.



If the smoke detector does not include either a warning or the radiation symbol on the label, and the label has not been removed, the device should not contain any radioactive material. If the label is missing or destroyed, treat the device as if it is an ionization unit. Please note that these detectors need to be disposed of based on the manufacturer's recommendations.

Why should you dispose of your device properly? If you have an ionization smoke detector the radiation material inside the device should be disposed of carefully. While the amount of radioactive metal in your smoke detector is minor, Americium 241, the isotope found in most smoke detectors, has a half-life of approximately 430 years. Aside from the radiation component, your smoke detector contains other

materials which can be recycled. Some state and local laws and regulations prohibit the disposal of ionization smoke detectors in the municipal waste stream. To that end, if radioactive material is detected in the municipal and residential solid waste stream it has the potential to cause serious impacts on human health and safety as well as the environment even at small amounts. Typically, when a solid waste load reaches its final destination and the radiation level detected exceeds the acceptable limit, the whole load of waste material is sent back to the point of generation to be investigated and properly handled. For this reason, smoke detectors containing radioactive material should be returned to the manufacturer for disposal and not disposed of in the regular waste stream. Keep in mind that not all manufacturers will take their products back. If the manufacturer of the detector accepts the device for recycling, include a note indicating "TO BE RECYCLED" inside of the box. Also, make sure to not damage the detector in your attempt to recycle it.

CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS:

Carbon monoxide detectors serve to alarm when dangerous levels of carbon monoxide are detected in an area. Major sources of carbon monoxide can come from vehicles and heaters that burn fuel. It is especially critical to have a carbon monoxide detector if you regularly burn wood or another type of fuel in the home. It is important to note that carbon monoxide detectors do not contain radioactive material and can be disposed of as you would photoelectric smoke detectors. Some manufacturers also have take-back programs as well. If they do not, remove the battery from your **carbon monoxide detector** and throw the remainder of the device in the trash.

