

Fire & Life Safety

Provincial Public Education Position Paper

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Issue: What public education message should be delivered regarding the testing, maintenance and replacement of smoke alarms?

Position:

Smoke alarms should be maintained through regular testing, cleaning and battery replacement.

Smoke alarms should be tested and maintained in accordance with manufacturer's instructions when available or once a month by pushing the test button and listening for the alarm.

For battery operated smoke alarms, replace batteries at least once a year or for extended life batteries according to manufacturer's instructions. Batteries should also be replaced when the smoke alarm makes a beeping sound indicating that the batteries need replacing.

Smoke alarms should be cleaned regularly, at least once every six months, by gently vacuuming the exterior.

Smoke alarms should be replaced at least every ten years.

Rationale:

Various messages are currently given to the public regarding intervals of testing and maintenance procedures for Smoke Alarms. To avoid confusion it is important to establish consistent criteria for Smoke Alarm testing and maintenance.

Purpose of Public Education Position Papers:

In order to provide for the consistent delivery of fire and life safety education in the Province of British Columbia, the BC Public Fire & Life Safety Education Advisory Committee through the Public Education Strategic Plan has identified the need for the development of Public Education Position Papers. While it is not mandatory for individual agencies who deliver fire and life safety educational programs to follow these position papers, it is hoped that these positions will be supported throughout British Columbia, in order to achieve consistency in the delivery of fire and life safety education.

Fire & Life Safety Public Education Position Papers are published by the Office of the Fire Commissioner in conjunction with the BC Public Fire & Life Safety Education Advisory Committee.

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