

Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Detector Inspection, Cleaning and Replacement

On November 3rd it will once again be time to set our clocks back, as Daylight Savings Time will come to an end. We should remember that along with setting our clocks back, we should also take the time to at least inspect, clean and change the batteries in our smoke and carbon monoxide detectors to be sure that they are functional.

Smoke Detectors

The smoke detectors that were installed in our villas are beginning to age, so you should consider replacing them with new ones. According to the United States Fire Administration, smoke detectors generally have a useful life of 8-10 years. Refer to the following article:

http://www.usfa.fema.gov/citizens/home_fire_prev/alarms/

The smoke detectors installed in the Villas by the builders are of the **ionization** type. If you are going to consider replacing your smoke detectors, you should consider replacing them with at least one detector that has dual operating sensors built into them. These detectors have both an **ionization** sensor (which reacts primarily to excessive heat) and a **photoelectric cell** sensor (which reacts to smoke) built into them. This type of detector will provide our owners with the best chance of receiving an early warning in case of fire. Recent studies have proven that in some residential fires, occupants have not been given early warning until the fire had reached advanced stages because there was not enough heat to activate the sensor on the ionization detectors, even though the amount of smoke in the area had reached levels that would cause the occupants to succumb to CO poisoning. This situation commonly occurs with smoldering fires, such as those started by a cigarette in a sofa or bed. By having both types of sensors in your detectors, you will have a better chance of surviving either situation, smoke or heat production.

The following article talks about the dual sensor detectors:

http://www.usfa.fema.gov/citizens/home_fire_prev/alarms/

*The following link will provide you with just one example of the type of smoke detector that you should consider: http://www.amazon.com/Kidde-PI2010-Sensor-Battery-Backup/dp/B0039YOWY4/ref=sr_1_2?ie=UTF8&qid=1377389331&sr=8-2&keywords=dual+sensor+smoke+detectors. As you can see, these detectors are UL rated, have both ionization and photoelectric cell sensors, and are powered by both house current and battery backup.

Smoke detectors should be placed in every living space within your villa. If you only have one such detector, it should be placed on the ceiling just outside of your sleeping room. If you only replace one detector with a dual sensor detector, then place it in this location for best coverage and ability to hear its warning sound.

Carbon Monoxide Detectors

Carbon Monoxide (CO) is another serious problem that we need to consider, especially in light of the recent tragedy that we suffered here at Bobcat Villas. This poisonous gas is the by-product of incomplete combustion and is odorless and colorless, making it difficult to detect by one's senses. Often times the only symptoms that victims notice are nausea and a headache, which may be dismissed as flu symptoms or "coming down with something." If you decide to install a CO detector, place it somewhere in the central part of your villa. Since we do not have gas appliances in our villas, the primary cause of CO poisoning will be our vehicles. Keep in mind that dangerous levels of CO can also develop from using gas grills, generators, and other types of gasoline, diesel or propane powered equipment in or near our garages or near any fresh air intake for our villas. For more information about CO, click on the following link: <http://www.nfpa.org/safety-information/for-consumers/fire-and-safety-equipment/carbon-monoxide>

Here is an example of a CO alarm that is battery operated and requires no electrical supply:

(http://www.amazon.com/First-Alert-CO400-Battery-Monoxide/dp/B000N8OYXI/ref=sr_1_5?ie=UTF8&qid=1377389581&sr=8-5&keywords=carbon+monoxide+detector)

Let's begin our winter season by doing everything we can to be safe. Test your existing detectors to make sure that they are functional. Use the brush and wand function on your Vacuum cleaner to clean dust and cob webs from inside your detectors. Change the batteries in them when you change your clocks for daylight savings time. Finally, if your detectors are nearing the 8-10 year mark, consider spending some money for safety by replacing your detectors with new dual sensor smoke detectors and new CO detectors.

If you have questions or need help with your detectors, the North Port Fire Department will come to your villa, at no charge, to change your batteries and check your smoke detector. Their telephone number is: 941-240-8150 ext. 2. If you need additional help, feel free to contact me and I will see if I can assist you.

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Bobcat Villa Resident

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*The specific products that I have included in this article were merely used as examples of different types of detectors and not meant to be a product endorsement for those products. There are numerous products on the market that will perform well. The buyer should pay attention to products that are UL approved when purchasing them, as they have been certified by Underwriters Labs as being effective.