



Management of Smoke Detectors

The most common type of smoke detector is an ionization detector, which contains a small amount of Americium 241, a synthetic isotope which emits both alpha and gamma rays. Each smoke detector contains about 1 microcurie (about 1/ 5000 of a gram) of Americium shielded inside the detector.

The alpha particles emitted from the detector penetrate the air no more than a few centimeters. The gamma radiation is a low intensity ray, and much of it is blocked by the casing of the detector. According to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the

amount of radiation that escapes the detector (at 1 meter from the alarm) is roughly 3000 times less than normal background radiation exposure rates. Background radiation rates consist of radiation from everyday sources (i.e. sun, rocks, soil, air, etc.). The only possible health risk is if the Americium 241 is inhaled. Therefore, make sure not to disturb, poke or play with the ingredient in a detector.

Although it is legal to dispose of smoke detectors in the trash, returning the smoke detector to the manufacturer is preferred. Manufacturers are mandated by Nuclear Regulatory law 10 CFR 32.27 to see that the radioactive waste is disposed at a nuclear waste disposal facility. When sending back a smoke detector, DO NOT take it apart. The entire smoke detector needs to be returned to the manufacturer or store by UPS ground mail (not airmail). The batteries, however, should be removed and properly disposed of or recycled. No special shipping is needed for a smoke detector: just put it in a box, maybe with some newspaper for padding, and send it. Dispose of a smoke detector in the garbage if no other options exist.

The following brands of smoke alarms/detectors are returnable to their original manufacturers. Mark the box "For Disposal" before mailing. Please contact the manufacturer before mailing your old smoke alarm/detector. Some manufacturers require a fee or have special requirements if the device is no longer under warranty.

Brand Name	Company	Mailing Address	Phone
American Sensors	Dicon Global	20 Steelcase Rd., W., Unit 3, Markham, Ontario L3R 1B2 Canada	(800) 387-4219
BRK	First Alert	Cusomer Service Disposal, 3901 Liberty St. Rd. Aurora, IL 60504	(800) 323-9005
Dicon Global	Dicon Global	20 Steelcase Rd., W., Unit 3, Markham, Ontario L3R 1B2 Canada	(800) 387-4219
Family Safety Products	Family Safety Products	Returns, 2879 Remico St. SW, Grandville, MI 49418	(616) 530-6540
Firex	Invensys Controls	"For Disposal Only", 28C Leigh Fisher Blvd., El Paso, TX 79906	(800) 445-8299

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First Alert	First Alert	Cusomer Service Disposal, 3901 Liberty St. Rd. Aurora, IL 60504	(800) 323-9005
Garrison	Dicon Global	20 Steelcase Rd., W., Unit 3, Markham, Ontario L3R 1B2 Canada	(800) 387-4219
Gentex	Gentex	Returns, 600 N. Centennial St., Zeeland, MI 49464	(800) 436-8391
Honeywell	Honeywell	Returns, 1985 Douglas Dr. N., Dock 4 (MN10), Golden Valley, MN 55422	(800) 328-5111
Kidde	Kidde	1394 S. Third St., Mebane, NC 27302	(800) 880-6788
LifeSaver	Kidde	1394 S. Third St. Mebane, NC 27302	(800) 880-6788
Masterguard	Masterguard	801 Hammond St., #200 Coppell, TX 75019	(877) 453-3473
Nighthawk	Kidde	1394 S. Third St. Mebane, NC 27302	(800) 880-6788
North-American	Dicon Global	20 Steelcase Rd., W., Unit 3, Markham, Ontario L3R 1B2 Canada	(800) -800-387-4219
System Sensor	System Sensor	3825 Ohio Ave. St. Charles, IL 60174	(800) 736-7672
Triad Safety Systems	Triad Safety Systems	4595 Airport Rd. Kearney, NE 68847	1-800-240-7681