

## Our “Wired-In” Smoke Detectors

Our Fox Hill Farm homes were constructed with smoke detectors that are connected to the electricity, or wired-in. Many of us have bought additional smoke detectors or carbon monoxide detectors which run on batteries alone. Each year at the beginning and end of Daylight Saving Time, we are reminded to change the batteries in our smoke detectors to ensure we will be alerted if a fire starts in our homes. But what about our wired-in smoke detectors?

If you did not initially realize your wired-in smoke detectors have batteries, you may have found out when the detector began beeping to indicate the battery was low. After climbing to reach the detector and rotating it to release it from its mount, you were confronted with a battery compartment that seemed to be prevented from opening by a plug with three wires into it (white, red, and black). That plug is in the center of the smoke detector’s upper side, the side toward the ceiling mount.

Here’s how to change the battery after having removed the smoke detector from the mount. First you should gently pull the smoke detector down far enough that you can pivot it to see the plug in the upper side (normally against the ceiling mount). You should see that the plug with the white, red, and black wires into it has two plastic pieces, one on each side of the plug. These plastic pieces are connected to the top of the plug (at the end where the wires go into the plug) and then seem to disappear into the smoke detector at the bottom. The plastic pieces lock the plug into the smoke detector so the power cannot accidentally be disconnected as the smoke detector is fastened to the ceiling mount plate.

If you press both of these plastic pieces toward the plug at the same time, then pull on the plug, the plug should

come out of the smoke detector. After removing the plug, the battery door can be opened for access to the rectangular nine volt (9V) battery. Please remember that one of the battery connectors (the round metal pieces at one end of the battery) is positive and one is negative. The positive connector is usually marked on the side of the battery closest to it. The smoke detector also has a marking on it to show you which side the positive connector should be facing when you insert the new one. You may need a flashlight to see that marking. In addition, there is a little plastic arm that automatically rotates upward from the battery compartment when the battery is removed. You must be sure that the arm is down when you insert the new battery. There should also be a small strap of fabric under the battery which makes it easier to remove the battery. You should be sure that this is also under the battery before inserting it into the battery compartment. If inserted correctly, the battery will keep both the plastic arm and fabric strap down.

After replacing the battery, you will need to line up the holes and pins on the smoke detector and its plug by using the pattern on both. Then press the plug into the back of the smoke detector until the plastic pieces on the sides of the plug catch into the smoke detector. Finally, you will need to guide the smoke detector back up onto the ceiling mount and rotate it to lock the smoke detector in place.

How often should the batteries be changed? Authoritative sources recommend once a year – which could be with the Spring or Fall changes in Daylight Saving Time.

Submitted by **Marty Frick**