



DEADLY SMOKE DETECTORS

“one type of smoke detector is far superior”



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“... one type of smoke detector is far superior than another, and having the right smoke detector can make all the difference.”

Jennifer Mayerle, Journalist, CBS, Atlanta, GA, USA, Feb, 2010

“one type is not superior”



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“Atlanta Fire Department Chief takes the position of the United States Fire Administration (USFA), that one type is not superior over the other.”
Kelvin Cochran, former head USFA, Atlanta Fire Chief, Atlanta, GA, Feb, 2010

CBS_DeadlySmokeDetectors is a 'living document' and may be updated as new information emerges. All Internet links (underlined blue text) may be accessed via the latest electronic version at: www.TheWorldFireSafetyFoundation.org/cbs

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TOUGH QUESTIONS ABOUT DEADLY SMOKE DETECTORS

The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has funded a smoke detector program for 17 years, giving millions of dollars to local fire departments all over the country. Georgia departments have benefited, installing more than 40,000 detectors over the years, the majority, if not all, of the smoke detectors given out, have been a type of ionization smoke detector, which CBS Atlanta News is calling the 'deadly smoke detector.'

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Third Sister Dies After Duluth Townhome Fire

Three Huddled Together In Closet

By Jennifer Mayerle, CBS Atlanta Reporter

POSTED: 10:52 pm EDT October 9, 2009

UPDATED: 8:24 am EDT October 11, 2009

DULUTH, Ga. -- Three sisters clung together in a closet to escape a fire in their townhome Friday night. Two died at a local hospital. Less than 24 hours after the fire, the third sister died from her injuries. The fire broke out on Howell Park Road in Duluth.

The sisters were ages 12, 17 and 19. Their mother was the only one to survive.

“She was just yelling, My three kids are on the third floor! She wanted someone to hurry up and get them out,” said a neighbor, who didn’t want to be identified.

The neighbor and friend has spent time at the hospital, listening to the mother recall what happened.

“To know that she's hurting, it hurts me myself. And to know all three of them, that they're all gone at the same time,” said the neighbor.

The girl’s mother told her they heard the smoke detector going off Friday night. The 19-year-old was with her. The mom told her oldest daughter to find the phone and call for help while she checked downstairs.

“By the time she turned around, the smoke was all over the second floor and so she thought ‘OK, I'm going to go jump off the second story porch,’” said the neighbor.

She said the mother thought she could open the front door and to her daughters out.

“She ran to the front door and realized it was locked and started screaming for help,” said the neighbor.

The three sisters were all together huddled inside a closet on the third floor. Firefighters battled intense heat and smoke to rescue them -- but in the end, their efforts weren't enough.

“It's a shock that, you know, you're not going to see this person again the next day,” said the neighbor.

Officials said the fire started in a bedroom near the kitchen on the first floor.

The names of the three sisters are not being released yet. The girl’s father is in the Army. He is expected to return home from Kuwait Sunday morning.

Note: On 03 March, 2010 this story was copied from CBS Atlanta’s website:

www.cbsatlanta.com/news/21256895/detail.html



After huddling together in a closet to escape the fire, the third sister dies in home with working smoke detector.

Officials Give Life-Saving Fire Safety Tips

Tips Could Save Your Life If Trapped In A Blaze

By Mike Paluska, CBS Atlanta Reporter

POSTED: 9:09 pm EDT October 11, 2009

UPDATED: 6:59 am EDT October 12, 2009

DACULA, Ga. -- Three sisters clung together in a closet to escape a fire in their townhome Friday night on Howell Park Road in Duluth.

Two died at a local hospital. Less than 24 hours after the fire, the third sister died from her injuries. Their mother was the only one to survive.

The names of the victims are 12-year-old Amirra Wingfield, 17-year-old Dairien Wingfield and 19-year-old Latoya Jackson. The girls were found all huddled together inside a closet on the third floor.

Gwinnett County firefighters said the tragedy is a painful reminder to people of all ages the importance of proper fire safety practices:

1. Install and maintain working smoke alarms on every level of the home and in each of the bedrooms.
2. Develop a home fire escape plan. Know two-ways out from every room and designate a meeting place outside the burning building.
3. Practice fire drills regularly with the entire family. Know who is going to help the youngest and the oldest.
4. If you are trapped in a burning building, remember to stay low to the floor and close as many doors as possible between you and the fire.
5. Open the window and hang something bright colored outside to signal firefighters. Wait low to the floor by the open window and call 911 to report your location inside the building. Jumping from a one-story dwelling could save your life.
6. If you are trapped on the upper floors of a house or apartment, a collapsible fire escape ladder could be your only access to safety. It is important to have an escape ladder to use, especially if you can't get down the stairs during a fire.

Note: On 03 March, 2010 this story was copied from CBS Atlanta's website:

www.cbsatlanta.com/news/21267529/detail.html



Public advised to "Install and maintain 'working' smoke alarms."

Vigil Held For Three Sisters Who Died After Townhome Fire Neighbours, Friends And Teachers Gather To Remember

By Jennifer Mayerle, CBS Atlanta Reporter

POSTED: 10:56 pm EDT October 14, 2009

UPDATED: 6:58 am EDT October 15, 2009

DULUTH, Ga. -- About 150 neighbors, friends and teachers of three girls who died after a townhome fire came together to remember the sisters, and show their support for their family. They lifted them up in prayer and with song. Many spoke about how each sister was special in her own way.



Vigil held for three sisters after tragic Duluth townhome fire.

Amirra's friends say she read all the time.

"She would just sit there and she would read, just read," said a friend.

Her sixth-grade teacher, Jana Johnson, said Amirra gave her a hug before getting on the bus last week.

"It's one hug that I wish I had held on longer and it's one hug that I won't ever forget," said Johnson.

DeeDee was a special needs student at Duluth High School.

"Her gift to us was her joy, her love of life and her beauty," said a teacher.

One friend met DeeDee when she randomly gave her a hug in the hallway.

"It's people like that that teach you about love and sincerity," said the friend.

At 19, LaToya was the oldest of the three. Her friends are having a hard time understanding the tragedy.

"Why her? She was just so young and she was just living life," said a friend.

Fire broke out at the Duluth townhome Friday night. The three huddled together in a closet on the third floor waiting for help. Their mother was the only survivor.

Friends said LaToya always wanted something better.

"She wanted a better life for her, a better life for DeeDee, a better life for Amirra. All she would say is 'I just want things to get better,' and I think where she is now, things can't get any better," said a friend.

A co-worker of the girls' mother spoke. He said her daughters were her life, and that she's getting by because through prayer. The sisters will be buried Saturday in Albany, Ga.

Note: On 03 March, 2010 this story was copied from CBS Atlanta's website:
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Which Smoke Detector Could Save Your Life?

CBS Atlanta Investigates Deadly Smoke Detectors

By Jennifer Mayerle, CBS Atlanta Reporter

POSTED: 10:32 pm EST February 5, 2010

UPDATED: 4:01 pm EST February 9, 2010

ATLANTA -- Approximately 3,000 people die each year in the United States in house fires. People living in Georgia are at greater risk. According to the National Center for Health Statistics, Georgia is in what's called the "burn belt," an area of the country at 30 percent Greater risk of dying in a house fire.

Smoke detectors save lives, but CBS Atlanta's Jennifer Mayerle discovered one kind of smoke detector, one many people don't know about, works better than others. Mayerle started investigating deadly smoke detectors after she covered a fire where three young girls died. She learned information that could save a life.

In one horrible day, Estella Wingfield lost her world. "I cry every single day, several times a day," said Wingfield.

Estella's three daughters, 19-year-old LaToya, 17-year-old Darien and 12-year-old Amirra died when their townhome caught fire. Estella is the only survivor.

"I miss everything. They were my whole life for 20 years," said Wingfield.

After the fire, Mayerle had tough questions about smoke detectors. "How could three sisters die with a working smoke detector in the home? Aren't smoke detectors supposed to alert people so they have time to escape a fire?" said Mayerle.

As part of the investigation, Mayerle traveled to Boston to test smoke detectors with the fire departments deputy chief, Jay Fleming, one of the country's top experts on smoke detectors. What Mayerle learned is the tragic deaths of LaToya, Darien and Amirra could have been prevented.

There are three types of smoke detectors you can buy.

"The ionization, which is by far the most common, because it's the least expensive by a little bit, is good for flaming fires, and not good for smoldering fires. The photoelectric is fantastic for smoldering fires, and not quite as good for flaming fires. The dual sensor, because it has both, in theory, is good for both types," said Fleming.



Firefighters mounted the three types of smoke detectors on the ceiling of the department's fire training house, with the detectors clearly labeled. We first set a smoldering fire.

"We're going to simulate a cigarette falling between two couch cushions, and igniting a smoldering fire," said Fleming.



Estella says the fire at her townhome began with a smoldering fire. A smoldering fire smokes for a long time before it turns to flames, if it ever does. The majority of people who die in a fire die from smoke inhalation, not the flames.

"The most common type of fire that occurs while people are sleeping, which is when you need a smoke detector to tell you there is a fire, in most fire officials opinion, is the smoldering fire," said Fleming.

The photoelectric smoke detector was the first to sound, 1 hour and 12 minutes after setting the smoldering fire.

Four minutes later, the dual detector started to blare. As time ticked by, more and more smoke filled the room, so you could barely see through the smoke. Even the Deputy Chief needs to put his mask on to breathe.

Twelve minutes after the first detector sounded, with the room filled with smoke from the floor to the ceiling, the ionization detector finally goes off.



"If we would switch to photoelectric technology . . . we could reduce fire deaths in this country easily by a third."
Deputy Chief Jay Fleming, Boston Fire Department

Continued . . .

Which Smoke Detector Could Save Your Life?

CBS Atlanta Investigates Deadly Smoke Detectors

Continued . . .

"The key thing is the time when the photoelectric went off, it was smoky, but you could still get through the room. At the time when the ionization went off, it would have been questionable whether or not people get through the rooms," said Fleming.

Remember, it's the smoke that usually kills.

How do the smoke detectors work in a flaming fire? We're going to tell you. Fleming set a couch on fire with a blow torch.

"All of them should go off relatively quickly," said Fleming.

A flaming fire is your kitchen fire, or children playing with matches. People are generally awake when it starts, and see the flames.

All of the smoke detectors went off within seconds of each other. The ionization went off first, after 37 seconds. Sixteen seconds later, the dual sounded. Just 36 seconds after the first detector went off, the photoelectric went off.

The CBS Atlanta tough questions test showed in a smoldering fire, the photoelectric smoke detector is far superior to an ionization. The photoelectric detector warned us 12 minutes before the ionization ever went off. Chances are, you have an ionization smoke detector. Ninety percent of homes in the United States have ionization detectors, not the photoelectric, which can save your life in a smoldering fire.

"I think, and I've taken the public position that if we would switch to photoelectric technology, or detectors which included photoelectric technology, we could reduce fire deaths in this country easily by a third and that would account to about a 1,000 people," said Fleming.

Three of those lives could be LaToya, Darien and Amirra. The Wingfield's had ionization smoke detectors in their home.

Mayerle asked Wingfield, "Do you think more notice would have helped you?"

"Yes, yes," said Wingfield.

Instead, Estella is left to think about the future her daughters could have had.

"I'll never see them get married," said Wingfield.

If you think the smoke detector you have in your home will save your life if there's a fire tonight, you could be deadly wrong. Firefighters say almost one out of every two people who die in a house fire die when there's a working smoke detector in the home.

How do you know what kind of smoke detector you have? For newer smoke detectors you can look on the outside of the detector. For example, the photoelectric will have a "P" on it.

You may need to look on the inside for older models. Check for the words ionization or photoelectric. If the name isn't there but the detector has a line that says it contains a radioactive material on the inside, it's an ionization detector, which is the most common kind of smoke detector in homes, and not the safest.

The ionization is the cheapest at \$5 to \$10. The photoelectric costs between \$15 and \$20. The dual is more expensive at \$20 to \$25.

Some states now require a photoelectric smoke detector in all new homes. Stay tuned to CBS Atlanta News all week. Mayerle will continue to ask the tough questions, including why people aren't looking out for you in the state of Georgia.



"I've covered deadly fires for the past ten years and I just learned there are different types of smoke detectors!"



"I travelled to Boston to test smoke detectors with the Fire Department's Deputy Chief Jay Fleming, one of the countries top experts..."



"I'll never see them get married."
Estella Wingfield talking about her daughters, LaToya (19), Darien (17), and Amirra (12).

Note: On 03 March, 2010 this story was copied from CBS Atlanta's website:

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CBS Atlanta Asks Oxendine About Smoke Detectors

Why Is The Type The Commissioner Uses Not Required In Georgia?

By Jennifer Mayerle, CBS Atlanta Reporter

POSTED: 9:53 pm EST February 8, 2010

UPDATED: 4:18 pm EST February 9, 2010

ATLANTA -- More than 600,000 people saw CBS Atlanta's exclusive tough questions investigation Monday night about deadly smoke detectors. Now, reporter Jennifer Mayerle asks the state's top fire official the tough questions about if his office is doing enough to keep you and your family safe.

The four-month-long investigation into deadly smoke detectors started after three young sisters, LaToya, Darien and Amirra Wingfield, died in a house fire in Glin County. The home had a working smoke alarm.

Mayerle traveled to Boston to put smoke detectors to the test, with deputy chief Jay Fleming, a leading expert on smoke detectors. There are three types of smoke detectors you can buy -- ionization, photoelectric and a dual sensor, which combines both. CBS Atlanta's tough question test found the photoelectric smoke detector is far superior to an ionization detector in a smoldering fire. It sounded 12 minutes before the ionization detector, which 90 percent of homes have.

"The key thing is the time when the photoelectric went off, it was smoky, but you could still get through the room. At the time when the ionization went off, it would have been questionable whether or not people could get through the rooms," said Fleming.

Fleming believes changing the law to require people have the photoelectric detector will save countless lives. Mayerle took her tough questions to state fire commissioner John Oxendine. Oxendine counts on the photoelectric smoke detector to keep his family safe, the same kind of smoke detector that alerted us early in our test.

"That is the more expensive, but when you're taking about saving your life that is best to have," said Oxendine.

But the state of Georgia only requires homes to have a smoke detector, not a specific kind. In fact, several fire departments around the state rely on buying smoke detectors through Oxendine's office. Most of them buy the cheaper, and less safe, ionization detector.

"Is it the cost that is preventing people from buying what is better and could save lives for people here in Georgia?" asked Mayerle.

"It's amazing what just a few dollars will do," said Oxendine.

After watching CBS Atlanta's tough question investigation about deadly smoke detectors, Oxendine is now open to trying to change the law.

"I think taking a look at this is something we definitely need to do, and I'm all for requiring a better smoke detector if we can get the support and get that passed," said Oxendine.

Massachusetts and Vermont have changed their law to require a photoelectric smoke detector, and Tennessee is considering similar legislation. CBS Atlanta will continue to ask the tough questions. Later this week, Mayerle talks to local fire departments to ask what they're doing to keep their community safe.

Note: On 03 March, 2010 this story was copied from CBS Atlanta's website:
www.cbsatlanta.com/news/22505247/detail.html



"When you are talking about saving your life, that (photoelectric technology) is the best to have."
John Oxendine, Georgia State Fire Commissioner

Tough Questions About Deadly Smoke Detectors

Detectors Given Out In Low-Income, High-Risk Neighborhoods

By Jennifer Mayerle, CBS Atlanta Reporter

POSTED: 5:22 pm EST February 11, 2010

UPDATED: 5:05 pm EST February 15, 2010

ATLANTA -- Fire departments all over Georgia give away smoke detectors at fire stations and to dozens of homes in targeted high-risk neighborhoods during community blitzes. The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has funded a smoke detector program for 17 years, giving millions of dollars to local fire departments all over the country.

Georgia departments have benefited, installing more than 40,000 detectors over the years, the majority, if not all, of the smoke detectors given out, have been a type of ionization smoke detector, which CBS Atlanta News is calling the 'deadly smoke detector.'

"It's just a typical ionization type smoke alarm," said Mark Jackson, public health adviser for the CDC.

After a deadly fire in Gwinnett County, where three young sisters died with a working ionization smoke detector in the home, CBS Atlanta News began a Tough Questions investigation to put smoke detectors to the test.

There are three types of smoke detectors you can buy: ionization, photoelectric and a dual sensor, which combines both. CBS Atlanta's Tough Question test found the photoelectric smoke detector is far superior to an ionization in a smoldering fire, the same type of fire that started when the sisters lost their lives. The photoelectric detector sounded 12 minutes before the cheaper and less effective ionization detector, which 90 percent of homes have.

Jackson wouldn't take a position on CBS Atlanta News' Tough Questions test, or the fact that two states have changed their laws to require a photoelectric smoke detector in homes.

"They both will give you equal time to react and get out of a fire," said Jackson.

[Click here to see which fire departments the CDC has funded.](#)

Click [here](#) to see what type of smoke detectors are given away in each county

But as our tough questions test found, that's not true. CBS Atlanta's Jennifer Mayerle took her tough questions to local fire departments. Gwinnett County, where the deadly fire happened, gives out only the cheaper and less effective ionization smoke detector.

"We want to be able to place more alarms and do more for the public," said Gwinnett County Fire Marshal Greg Schaffer.

Mayerle asked, "Would it be better to give out a fewer number of smoke detectors but a better kind, that gives people a better chance of getting out alive in case of any kind of fire?"

"I don't know how you weigh that," said Schaffer.

The Atlanta Fire Department gives out both the ionization and photoelectric smoke detector. Atlanta Fire Deputy Chief H.B. Dodson said the department goes for the cheapest kind of smoke detector available when buying in bulk. That's most often the ionization smoke detector.

"Smoke detectors are our first line of defence as far as alerting families," said Dodson.

Mayerle asked Dodson if being alerted sooner can save lives, why isn't Atlanta only giving out the photoelectric smoke detector?

"Well, actually, we're going to take a look," said Dodson.

Cobb County is the only local fire department to give out a detector that includes the more expensive photoelectric technology, which can save lives in a smoldering fire. The department moved from the ionization to the dual sensor detector six months ago.

"I think you want your best protection that you can get for your family and right now the best protection that's out there is that dual sensor," said Cobb County Fire Chief Sam Heaton.

After CBS Atlanta's Tough Questions investigation, the Gwinnett County and Atlanta fire departments are looking into giving out only the photoelectric smoke detector.



CBS say their testing shows the CDC's claims that both detectors give equal time to react are not true.
Mark Jackson, Public Health Advisor, CDC, Atlanta

Note: On 03 March, 2010 this story was copied from CBS Atlanta's website:
www.cbsatlanta.com/news/22536806/detail.html

Homeowner Changes Smoke Detectors Courtney Scott Checks Smoke Detectors, Makes Changes

By Jennifer Mayerle, CBS Atlanta Reporter

POSTED: 6:22 pm EST February 12, 2010

All week CBS Atlanta News has been asking tough questions about smoke detectors, while providing information about what type of detector is best to alert families in case of a smoldering fire.

CBS Atlanta put three types of smoke detectors to the test, the ionization, photoelectric and dual sensor, which combines both. The photoelectric detector sounded 12 minutes before the cheaper and less effective ionization detector, which 90 percent of homes have.

CBS Atlanta asked the tough questions and found state Fire Commissioner John Oxendine depends on the photoelectric smoke detector to keep his family safe, but his office mainly sells the cheaper, ionization detector to local fire departments.

In fact, millions of dollars are spent each year giving out the ionization detector to low-income and high-risk fire areas.

A CBS Atlanta News viewer saw the tough questions investigation and checked what type of smoke detector she has in her home.

Courtney Scott bought her first home in 2007, after her four kids were grown and had their own families.

"It's my own space," said Scott.

As a low-income homeowner, Scott qualified for a weatherization program through the Clayton County Community Services Authority. While they were weatherizing her home, they also installed three smoke detectors.

"I thought that was great. I really didn't think anything of it," said Scott.

That is, until she saw CBS Atlanta's tough questions investigation into smoke detectors, and learned the photoelectric smoke detector is far superior to an ionization smoke detector in a smoldering fire.

"I thought well, let me look at my smoke detector and see what kind I have. I found out it was the ionization only smoke detector -- not the most effective one, but it is the least expensive," said Scott.

Clayton County Community Services Authority serves seniors, low-income families and people with disabilities. It installs hundreds of the ionization smoke detectors in homes each year.

"You can't really put a price on life, as far as what it's worth, but it just seems like there should be a better alternative," said Scott.

Scott plans to change her smoke detectors to the photoelectric and share what she's learned.

"Now I can tell other people to check their smoke detectors, especially my children, to make sure they're safe," said Scott.

The Rev. Charles Grant, executive director of Clayton County Community Services Authority, said after seeing CBS Atlanta's tough questions investigation, he will now look into only giving out the photoelectric smoke detector.

If you have an ionization smoke detector, don't throw it away. An ionization detector is better than nothing. Homeowners can do one of two things, add a photoelectric smoke detector to their home to compliment the ionization, or replace their ionization with a photoelectric or dual sensor smoke detector.

Note: On 03 March, 2010 this story was copied from CBS Atlanta's website:
www.cbsatlanta.com/news/22549724/detail.html



State Fire Commissioner's family has photoelectric detectors while ionizations given out in low-income, high-risk areas.

Smoke Detector Probe Gets Attention At Capitol

Georgia Senate Public Safety Chairman Considers Hearing To Change Law

By Jennifer Mayerle, CBS Atlanta Reporter

POSTED: 8:34 pm EST February 15, 2010

UPDATED: 5:05 pm EST February 16, 2010

ATLANTA -- This month, CBS Atlanta News has asked the tough questions about smoke detectors and what kind is right to keep your family safe in a smoldering fire. The investigation has now gotten attention at the state Capitol.

"I think your report was very effective," said Senator Jack Murphy.

Murphy is the chairman of the Georgia Senate Public Safety Committee. Murphy watched CBS Atlanta's tough questions investigation into smoke detectors, an investigation that started after three young sisters died with a working smoke detector in the home.

With the help of the Boston Fire Department, CBS Atlanta put three types of smoke detectors to the test: the ionization, the photoelectric and the dual sensor, which combines both, to see which is better in a smoldering fire. The photoelectric detector was far superior, alerting 12 minutes before the cheaper and more widely used ionization detector.

"I am absolutely a proponent of smoke detectors and whatever we can do to save people's lives within the state," said Murphy.

The senator said he believes education is key to alerting homeowners in the state.

"If they knew there was a better smoke detector or one that would be more effective out there, in their homes, that they would use it," said Murphy.

Massachusetts and Vermont have already changed their laws to require the photoelectric smoke detectors in all newly constructed single family homes, as well as homes sold after the law changed. Tennessee is looking at similar legislation.

Mayerle asked Murphy if it's the state's responsibility to try to save lives by changing the law.

"Well, that's a difficult question to answer. Is it the state's responsibility?" said Murphy.

While Murphy is not yet sold on changing the law in Georgia, he is open to having a hearing to see if there's enough interest to look at changing the law.

"We could certainly have some kind of study committee over the summer and talk about this and look at the facts and the figures and the lives that it could save and how it works and how much it costs and just look at the whole thing," said Murphy.

After seeing CBS Atlanta's tough questions investigation into smoke detectors, he checked, and he has the ionization smoke detector in his home. Murphy is now looking into changing to the photoelectric detector.

If you have an ionization smoke detector, don't throw it out. An ionization detector is better than nothing. Homeowners can choose to add a photoelectric smoke detector to their home to compliment the ionization, or replace their ionization with a photoelectric or dual sensor smoke detector.

Note: On 03 March, 2010 this story was copied from CBS Atlanta's website:
www.cbsatlanta.com/news/22574422/detail.html



Senator Jack Murphy said he believes education is the key to alerting homeowners in the state.

Tough Questions for Atlanta Fire Department

CBS Atlanta News Questions Smoke Detector Give-Away

By Jennifer Mayerle, CBS Atlanta Reporter

POSTED: 10:00 pm EST February 17, 2010
UPDATED: 7:16 pm EST February 18, 2010

ATLANTA -- CBS Atlanta News has tough questions for the Atlanta Fire Department. The fire department has given out smoke detectors all over the city for the past four years, mainly to low-income and high-risk fire areas as part of the Atlanta Smoke Alarm Program or ASAP. They also target neighborhoods that have recently had a fire.

Two weeks ago, Deputy Chief H.B. Dodson talked to CBS Atlanta News about the program and the critical need for smoke detectors in homes.

"We recommend a smoke detector, we don't recommend a technology or a type either one because what we're looking for is an alert to come first," said Dodson.

CBS Atlanta News started a four-month long tough question investigation into smoke detectors after three Gwinnett County sisters died with a Working smoke detector in the home. With the help of the Boston Fire Department, CBS Atlanta put three types of smoke detectors to the test: the ionization, the photoelectric and the dual sensor, which combines both, to see which is better in a smoldering fire. The photoelectric detector was far superior, alerting us 12 minutes before the cheaper and more widely used ionization detector.

Dodson says the Atlanta Fire Department has given out more than 10,000 smoke detectors since ASAP began in 2006, and CBS Atlanta has learned most of them are the cheaper ionization smoke detector.

"This program has been going on four years, and last year in 2009 we gave away 6,066 smoke detectors," said Dodson.

Based on numbers the fire department gave CBS Atlanta, Atlanta fire has ordered a total of 5,173 photoelectric smoke detectors since 2006. They currently have 4,800 in storage. Based on Atlanta's numbers, the Atlanta Fire Department has given out less than 400 photoelectric smoke detectors, but more than 10,000 of the ionization smoke detectors. Atlanta's smoke detector give-aways are funded through grants, as well as corporate and community sponsors.

CBS Atlanta News has not received an answer to why the Atlanta Fire Department hasn't given out the more effective photoelectric smoke detectors that are sitting in storage. The fire department said they will give out those smoke detectors the next time they canvass a neighbourhood.



Jennifer Mayerle asking Atlanta Fire Department's Deputy Chief, Huley B. Dodson, tough questions about Atlanta's Give-Away Smoke Alarm Program.



Click [here](#) to see what type of smoke detectors are given away in each county

Note: On 03 March, 2010 this story was copied from CBS Atlanta's website:
www.cbsatlanta.com/news/22596212/detail.html

Atlanta Fire Department Responds To Tough Questions Investigation

AFD Did Business With Former Inmate

By Jennifer Mayerle, CBS Atlanta Reporter

POSTED: 5:42 pm EDT September 2, 2010

UPDATED: 6:13 pm EDT September 8, 2010

ATLANTA -- Friday the Atlanta Fire Department did not respond to requests for an interview about a CBS Atlanta News investigation into its credibility.

CBS Atlanta was conducting a major investigation into the best type of smoke detector for homes and wanted to find out which type AFD was giving out. The best kind to have to alert a family during a smoldering fire when it's crucial to have an early warning is called a photoelectric detector. We kept getting conflicting answers from AFD. That prompted another investigation that led reporter Jennifer Mayerle to California where she uncovered even more tough questions and a company with a checkered past that AFD did business with.

Bob and Judie Silver run a company called Silver Sails Travel in Calabasas, Calif. You might think they sell airline and cruise tickets, but that wasn't always the case. Silver Sails has changed what they sell several times. At one point, they sold industrial supplies to prisons and cleaning chemicals to NASA, then pharmaceuticals. Last decade, they sold smoke detectors to AFD.

"I have some questions about the Atlanta Fire Department and the type of smoke detectors you sent them," said Mayerle.

Judie Silver responded, "I have nothing to say to you."

AFD told CBS Atlanta they bought the best type of smoke detector for your home from Silver Sails. The department bought them to give to low income and high risk fire areas.

Mayerle asked the fire department to prove it. When they wouldn't show her the smoke detectors, she filed paperwork to find out what they city bought. Documents show the fire department apparently had no idea what they bought.

After CBS Atlanta started asking tough questions, AFD sent an e-mail to Bob Silver to try to find out what they bought. Silver responded, writing, "To the best of my recollection you purchased photoelectric type smoke detector ... and it met the requirements of the purchase order you had issued."

A document followed saying Silver Sails sold AFD more than 18,500 of the photoelectric detectors. In reality that order and purchase order mentioned, actually called for a cheaper and less effective smoke detector, a type CBS Atlanta News calls a deadly smoke detector. Even Silver Sails supplier in China recognized the smoke detector as the cheaper kind.

Why would AFD try to cover that up? They wouldn't answer that tough question. And check out who the fire department did business with.

CBS Atlanta News found Bob Silver spent time in prison for defrauding the government before he did business with AFD. He pleaded guilty to selling the Department of Defense bogus supplies to be used by all branches of the military and NASA. He also served time for terrorist threat, corporal injury to a spouse and assault with a deadly weapon.

And while Silver Sails was doing business with AFD, Bob Silver was being investigated by the California Attorney General's Office. Silver had to surrender his license to sell pharmaceuticals. The AG alleges among many acts of unprofessional conduct, Silver sold dangerous drugs to businesses in foreign countries not licensed by the Board of Pharmacy.

"How can we trust your company? How do we know what you actually say is true?" Mayerle asked Judie Silver.

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Atlanta Fire Department Responds To Tough Questions Investigation

Continued . . .

Silver dodged our tough questions. Bob Silver wouldn't talk to us. Instead they called the police.

Mayerle had repeatedly asked AFD for an interview about the smoke detectors and Silver Sails and has asked to see the warehouse where they keep the smoke detectors. Tuesday, the newly sworn in fire Chief Kelvin Cochran agreed to an interview.

In response to the confusion about what type of smoke detector AFD bought and allowing CBS Atlanta News to see the warehouse where they're kept, Cochran said, "I don't understand why there was a reluctance to share that information. Obviously it created some questions as to the integrity of the responses you were getting."

Cochran said that won't happen again while he's chief. And he added despite Silver Sails record, "I can say with great assurance that all the ones we've installed, in spite of their history and their questionable business practices, the ones we've installed in the homes of the citizens of Atlanta are working."

While CBS Atlanta News investigation revealed the photoelectric detector is superior, Cochran's stance is that all smoke detectors save lives. He said the Atlanta Fire Department takes the position of the U.S. Fire Administration that one type is not superior over another.

Note: On 06 October, 2010 this story was copied from CBS Atlanta's website:

www.cbsatlanta.com/news/24860545/detail.html

CBS Atlanta Investigates Fire Safety On, Off-Campus At UGA

Students Are More At Risk Living Off-Campus

By Jennifer Mayerle, CBS Atlanta Reporter

POSTED: 12:10 pm EDT October 1, 2010

UPDATED: 1:21 pm EDT October 5, 2010

ATHENS, Ga. -- In the last ten years, more than 100 college students have died in on or off-campus fires nationwide. CBS Atlanta News conducted a four-month-long tough questions investigation that found one type of smoke detector is far superior than another, and having the right smoke detector can make all the difference.

Reporter Jennifer Mayerle went to the University of Georgia, the state's largest university with more than 30,000 enrolled, to see if college students there are safe.

UGA is home of the Bulldawg nation and known as this year's "Top Party School." Incoming freshman said they couldn't wait to arrive.

"I was excited to meet all the new people and move in with my roommate and be out on my own for a little bit," said Paige Sawyer. Mark Wade Jr. said fire safety was far from his mind.

UGA is home of the Bulldawg nation and known as this year's "Top Party School." Incoming freshman said they couldn't wait to arrive.

"I was excited to meet all the new people and move in with my roommate and be out on my own for a little bit," said Paige Sawyer.

Mark Wade Jr. said fire safety was far from his mind.

"Everyone is kind of concerned about going out, this and that. It just kind of crosses my mind when something bad happens," said Wade.

Both students live in one of the oldest buildings on campus. Mayerle wanted to find out how safe the dorms are at UGA.

After going undercover in the dorms, she met with Russell Dukes, the head of fire safety at UGA. Mayerle learned the fire plan at UGA is well thought out and is part of a multilayered system, incorporating what CBS Atlanta News found to be the best technology.

"This is one of the safest campuses you'll find in the country. We take our fire safety very seriously here and we do everything we possibly can to make sure the kids are safe while they're here," said Dukes.

While UGA dorms look good, here's the reason for concern. Three out of four students at UGA live off-campus. CBS Atlanta News has learned students are much more likely to die in an off-campus fire compared to on-campus or in Greek housing.

UGA baseball player Lance Martin lives with three friends off campus. He said smoke detectors are the last thing on his mind.

"At my age that's not one of the things I'm thinking about. When I moved in the house, I didn't even notice where they are until they go off really," said Martin.

The home has only the cheaper and less effective ionization smoke detectors, a kind of smoke detector a CBS Atlanta News investigation found might not alert residents in time to get out during a smoldering fire. Having the right smoke detector can make all the difference.

"It's a little bit scary because you kind of think of the fact that if there's a smoldering fire and you're asleep, there might be a chance that smokes going to overtake your room or overtake your lungs before you ever wake up," said Martin.

Tuesday night on CBS Atlanta News at 11, meet two dads who say they regret not knowing more about smoke detectors before their daughters went off to college.

Note: On 06 October, 2010 this story was copied from CBS Atlanta's website:

www.cbsatlanta.com/news/25240381/detail.html



Fire Safety at College Dormitories

Dads of Fire Victims Talk About Better Smoke Detector

Two Ohio Dads Inform People About Photoelectric Smoke Detectors

By Jennifer Mayerle, CBS Atlanta Reporter

POSTED: 5:33 pm EDT September 30, 2010

UPDATED: 8:48 am EDT October 6, 2010

ATLANTA -- Every year hundreds of thousands of teens go off to college. For most, it's their first time away from home to experience life on their own, a time to meet new friends and start a new chapter in life. It's also a time for parents to let go, but for two dads they never thought it would mean letting go forever.

When homecoming queen Andrea Dennis went off to Ohio University, she had her whole life ahead of her.

"Her happiest years were when she went away to college. She just really thrived in that environment," said Andrea's dad, Dean Dennis.

Julie Turnbull couldn't wait to get to Miami University in Ohio.

"There's a lot more to college than just studying. She was a good student but she loved the friendships she made," said Julie's dad, Doug Turnbull.

Like most parents, Andrea's and Julie's dads both worried about their daughters' safety at school, but never imagined what they hoped would be the greatest years of their daughters' lives would haunt them for the rest of their lives.

"It's a day you try not to think about too often," said Dennis.

That day is April 13, 2003. It's the day a fire erupted at a house where Andrea was visiting friends at nearby Ohio State. The fire, which was ruled arson, claimed the lives of five students.

"I never imagined that Andrea would die in a fire. She just was bigger than life to me," said Dennis.

Two years later, in April 2005, came another tragedy at an Ohio campus. Three students were killed, burned beyond recognition.

"Apparently someone was smoking and dropped a cigarette in the couch and the couch smoldered for hours. By the time the first smoke detector went off, the three kids were already dead," said Turnbull.

Turnbull's daughter, Julie, was one of them.

"Julie was found in her bed. She had gone to sleep that night and never woke up the next morning," said Turnbull.

Since then, Dennis and Turnbull learned both off-campus homes had only ionization type smoke detectors inside. It's a type of smoke detector a CBS Atlanta News investigation found is cheaper and less effective in detecting a smoldering house fire, the kind of fire when it's crucial to have an early warning. Experts say it's the smoke that usually kills, not the flames. Both girls died of smoke inhalation.

"Seventeen smoke detectors wasn't enough to save those three kids," said Turnbull.

That's why the dads have teamed up and made it their mission to inform people about another type of smoke detector, the photoelectric. It's a smoke detector CBS Atlanta News found to be far superior in alerting in a smoldering fire.

"There's a huge difference between an ionization detector and a photoelectric smoke detector. In most cases, photoelectric smoke detectors will save your life and the ionization is the roll of the dice. And we had no idea about any of this," said Dennis.

Massachusetts and Vermont have changed their laws to require a photoelectric smoke detector. And this past summer, the Albany Fire Department in California changed their ordinance to require all detectors be photoelectric. Georgia does not require photoelectric smoke detectors.

Note: On 07 October, 2010 this story was copied from CBS Atlanta's website:

www.cbsatlanta.com/news/25230610/detail.html



Ohio Fathers Speak Out About Losing Their Daughters