

How to Spot a Counterfeit Alarm

Smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms are essential for home safety, delivering early warnings that save lives. But a growing threat, counterfeit fire safety devices, is putting more families at risk.



Watch Out for These Signs:

- No brand name or certification mark
- Misspelled words or blurry pictures and text on packaging, products, and online listings
- Terms like “approved” or “pending” instead of “listed” or “classified”
- No manual or customer support contact



How to Stay Safer at Home

- Buy only from trusted, well-known brands and retailers
- Choose alarms certified to ULSE standards: UL 217 for smoke alarms, and UL 2034 for CO alarms.
- Look for certification marks such as the UL Mark from UL Solutions, or the ETL Listed Mark from Intertek.
- Avoid deals that seem too good to be true, especially from unfamiliar sellers.
- Replace smoke alarms every 10 years; replace CO and combination CO/smoke alarms every 5–7 years.
- Install smoke and CO alarms on every level of your home, preferably outside sleeping areas.
- Test alarms according to the manufacturer’s instructions, at least twice per year. If the testing sound is weak or there isn’t a sound, it’s time to replace the batteries or the whole device, if it’s a sealed-battery alarm.

Certification marks to look for:



The Bottom Line

Counterfeit alarms put lives at risk by failing at the most critical moments. Take a moment to check your smoke and CO alarms. Ensure they’re genuine, properly certified, and in good working order.