

Title: The ABCs of Testing your Alarms

SEO Title: Smoke Alarm, Carbon Monoxide Detector and Security System Testing

Meta description: Testing your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and your security system can save your life. We'll show you how and when to do it.

Just imagine this scenario. James Bond is facing off against his latest archrival. All of his weapons have been removed and he's being held at gunpoint. All he has is a pen . . . a pen that happens to be a laser, thanks to Q back at headquarters. With only a moment to spare, he opens the pen, points it at the villain and . . . nothing happens. Back at headquarters, someone notices that they forgot to test the pen and make sure the batteries worked. But it's too late. 007 is no more.

It doesn't matter how cool or advanced or modern your equipment is - if you don't test it regularly to make sure it works the way it's supposed to, it's of no use to you! And while your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms and home security system aren't quite as fancy as a laser-shooting pen, it's equally as essential to your well-being and the health and safety of your family that you test their efficacy regularly.

Want to keep your home protected? It's as simple as ABC!

### <h3>Home Security System Testing</h3>

**Alert the security company.** Before you test your home security system, contact your provider to let them know. If you are an ADS Security customer, call our monitoring center at 1-800-866-6486 and ask them to place your system in test mode. Test mode turns off the signal going to the monitoring center, and until it's turned back on, it won't result in any false alarms or emergency services being dispatched to your address.

**Be a burglar!** Now that your alarm is in test mode, it's safe to test. Arm your system and trigger an alarm by opening a window or door. If you really want to have fun with it, wear all black and pretend you're a home invader. See if the neighbors notice. On second thought, don't do that. Did the alarm sound? Now you know it works! If you want to be truly meticulous, you can test every entry point, but that might be unnecessary.

**Call the security company back to make sure the alarm signal came through.** Alarm operators can set the test mode to expire after 10 minutes or even up to an hour. To guarantee your panel communicates an alarm signal to the monitoring center, call your provider back and receive confirmation. It's very important to do this, because otherwise if an alarm goes off, the only person who will notice will be the burglar.

### <h3>How often should you test your home security system?</h3>

Testing is important to ensure that you have proper communication with the monitoring center, check to see if any sensors are faulty, or discover if any batteries are low. We recommend testing your security system once a month, and keep in mind that if it needs any maintenance, ADS Security will be out there as soon as possible, sometimes on the same day, and it's free!

### <h3>Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Detector Testing</h3>

**Always clean your detectors.** Smoke and carbon monoxide detectors can get clogged with dust and other debris that may affect their ability to properly detect smoke and alert you. With a damp cloth or compressed air, clean off your detectors before testing.

**Battery test.** If your smoke detectors are also monitored by ADS Security, before doing this step, call the monitoring center at 1-800-866-6486 and have them put your system in test mode. If not, simply press the test button on the smoke alarm. A loud beep will tell you that the battery still has power. A weak beep tells you that it's time to change the battery. No beep tells you that the battery is completely dead.

**Check the functionality.** The final step is to perform a functionality test of the smoke detector. Will it detect smoke? While you can quite literally set something on fire and hold it under the detector until enough smoke wafts up to it, we do not recommend this approach. Instead, go to any hardware store and buy a UL-rated can of smoke. Follow the instructions and spray the smoke at your detector as directed.

Did it alert you of the presence of smoke? If so, the test is done once you've repeated these steps for every detector in your home. Call the monitoring center to turn off test mode if appropriate for your detectors. If one of the alarms doesn't work, it's time to replace the entire detector.

There is no functionality test for carbon monoxide detectors because you should never purposefully introduce carbon monoxide into your home.

### <h3>How often should you test your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors?</h3>

A monthly test is appropriate for all smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors in your home. In addition, don't wait until your detector notifies you that the battery is low to change the batteries. We recommend changing your batteries on the second Sunday of March, which has been designated Check Your Batteries Day. It coincides with Daylight Savings Time and can be a great reminder to replace all of the batteries in your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.

As you can see, taking a little time each month to perform a simple test of your home security system, smoke alarms, and carbon monoxide detectors is as simple as ABC and essential to keeping your valuables, your home, and your loved ones safe.