

Healthy Indoor Air Series

Water Alarm Detectors

What is a water alarm detector?

The water alarm detector is a self-contained electronic device that sounds an alarm when its sensor is in contact with water. It should be used near water heaters, washing machines, sump pumps, bathtubs, toilets, and dishwashers.

Slow leaks from appliances and plumbing fixtures often go unnoticed. Excess moisture and standing water from a slow leak can cause extensive damage to the floors and walls of your home. There is also the potential for mold growth. A water alarm detector will let you know if there is a moisture problem.

How do these detectors work?

There are two types of water alarm detectors—passive and active. The passive detector uses a 9-volt battery. The moisture sensor is placed on the floor and activates the alarm when it becomes wet. Damp locations or high temperatures may reduce the life of the battery, so the detector should be checked regularly to see if it is working properly. These detectors can be purchased at most home improvement stores.

Active water detector systems can operate an individual appliance or control the whole house. This system also generates an alarm, and it automatically shuts off the water supply. These systems are more costly than passive systems.

Since active water detectors may require special shut-off valves and electrical wiring, it is best to consult a professional to determine which system will meet your needs.

For more information

Contact your local U of I Extension office or visit our web site:

University of Illinois Extension
<http://www.solutions.uiuc.edu>

Authors: Debra Bartman, Pat Hildebrand,
Lois Smith, Susan Taylor
Consumer and Family Economics Educators
University of Illinois Extension 2004



University of Illinois-U.S. Department of Agriculture-
Local Extension Councils Cooperating
University of Illinois Extension provides equal
opportunities in programs and employment.