



David Isaac - Australia's Leading Fire Safety Expert:

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Karl Stefanovic - 60 Minutes Reporter:

"Isn't that gonna happen?"



David Isaac is Australia's leading fire safety expert.



There are two types of smoke alarms. This one is a photoelectric - and this one is an ionization.



They look the same. They feel the same. They cost about the same ... in fact it's probably in your home.



They may have been overcome by smoke, especially if they are relying on an ionization smoke alarm.



Sounds to me like you've reached the end of your frustration limits.

Karl Stefanovic: David Isaac is Australia's leading fire safety expert. He, like so many, was horrified by the Logan fire tragedy - but he certainly wasn't surprised.

David Isaac: There are two types of smoke alarms. This one is a photoelectric - and this one is an ionization. They look the same. They feel the same. They cost about the same. This is the one that's in more than 90% of all Australian homes, in fact it's probably the one in your home.

Karl Stefanovic: Well I automatically think that my home's safe I've got fire alarms.

David Isaac: And the average consumer thinks he's safe because he buys a smoke alarm, sticks it on the roof of his house and he expects that before the house fills with smoke he will be given a warning and be able to escape to safety.

Karl Stefanovic: Isn't that gonna happen?

David Isaac: Not if he's relying on an ionization smoke alarm, and not if the fire develops at night with a long smouldering phase while he is sleeping. People wake from a fire in the middle of the night disoriented. The alarm's gone off. They may have been overcome by smoke, especially if they are relying on an ionization smoke alarm because it won't go off until the fire develops to the flaming stage - and we know globally that once the fire reaches the flaming stage in a residence, there is less than three minutes to escape. Less than three minutes.

So if you've been asleep, and you don't hear the smoke alarm activate, or maybe the smoke alarm is not close to the fire and it doesn't activate, and by the time you do wake the fire is substantially developed, what hope have you got?

Karl Stefanovic: Sounds to me like you've reached the end of your frustration limits.

David Isaac: Very much so.

Karl Stefanovic: So what difference does it make in a household then; given a fire?

David Isaac: What difference does it make as to what type of smoke alarm they have?

Karl Stefanovic: Yes.

David Isaac: It can make the difference between surviving and dying in the fire - it can make that much difference. An ionization smoke alarm will respond to heat and flames. Too late. You don't want to know about a fire when it's already flaming in the home, because statistically we know you've got less than three minutes to get out.

But if you had a photoelectric smoke alarm, while you were asleep and the fire was developing it would activate from smoke, from actual smoke.

Ionization smoke alarms do not respond to visible smoke. As I've said they will respond to heat and flames but they will not respond to visible smoke.



Australia | 19 October 2014
New Zealand | 10 November 2014

Trailer | 31 seconds



Why the smoke alarm in your home may not save you.

Part One | 9 Minutes



Part Two | 11 Minutes



“Like most of us, I thought the fire alarms fitted in my home would protect my family, but what I’ve just seen is shocking.”

“What will it take for the Board (ABCB) to make that decision to change lives?”
Karl Stefanovic, Reporter | 60 Minutes Australia



“Grab yourself the photoelectric alarms, bring them back to your home, unscrew the ionization ones, put the photoelectric ones on the ceiling. It can save your family’s life.”

Karl Stefanovic, 60 Minutes Reporter

David Isaac Interview | 2 Minutes



David Isaac | Australia’s Leading Fire Safety Expert, over 40 years electrical engineering experience, Standards Australia committee member FP002, FPAA technical advisory committee member TAC/2

Karl Stefanovic Interview | 2 Minutes



Karl Stefanovic | Australian Gold Logie-Winning television presenter, co-host, Nine Network’s ‘Today’ breakfast program, 60 Minutes reporter

Watch the Film, Read the Report: www.SmokeAlarmWarning.org