

## **This smoke-detecting phone dock could save your life**

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House fires are a serious, deadly problem. Death from fires and burns are the third leading cause of fatal home injury, according to the [CDC](#) [1]. Every 169 minutes, someone dies in a fire and every 30 minutes, someone is injured.

However, if you have enough smoke detectors in your house, you have a 50 percent better chance of survival, according to the [National Fire Protection Association](#) [2]. Just recently, a house near our office went up in flames and currently sits on the lot, completely destroyed and accompanied only by a burned out car that was in the driveway. All 11 occupants of the house survived, thanks to their smoke detectors.

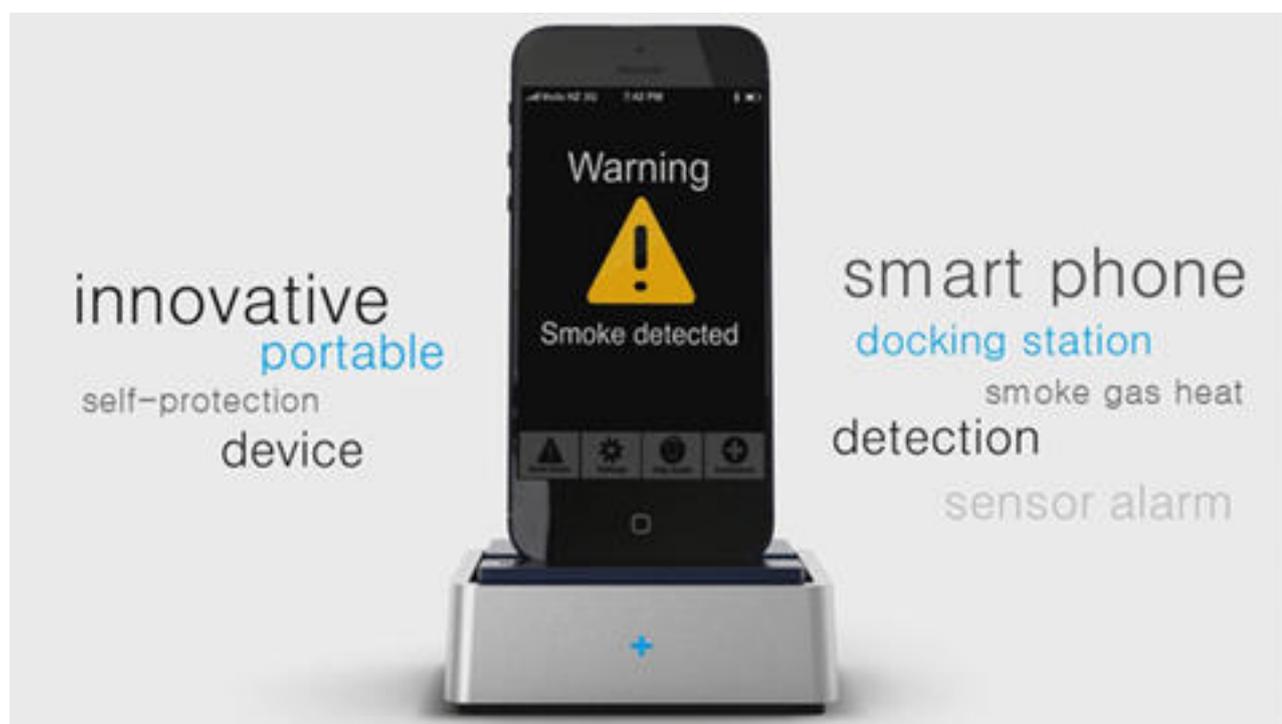
Other than making sure you have the recommended amount of detectors with fresh batteries—get a carbon monoxide detector while you're at it—the Sense+ smart dock could offer additional piece of mind to anyone worried about fires.

Sense+, a current [indiegogo campaign](#) [3], is a docking station meets smoke and gas sensor and app. The device will work in conjunction with your smoke detectors and isn't designed to replace them altogether.

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The dock, which pulls power from the main grid or backup batteries—contains a photo-electric smoke sensor and also a carbon monoxide sensor. The system requires an app download to your iPhone. If either sensor detects gas or smoke, it will start up your phone. If you don't respond, it will start sounding an alarm. The app will begin calling members of your family or emergency contacts from a list you have created. Following the phone calls, the app will offer to call emergency services.

The fact that the sensor is photo-electric means that they're able to detect fires that start with long periods of smoldering as opposed to a traditional ionization smoke detector, where the strength is detecting raging flames. According to the [NFPA](#) [4], photo-electric detectors work by aiming, 'a light source into a sensing chamber at an angle away from the sensor. Smoke enters the chamber, reflecting light onto the light sensor; triggering the alarm.' On the other hand ionization detectors, "have a small amount of radioactive material between two electrically charged plates, which ionizes the air and causes current to flow between the plates. When smoke enters the chamber, it disrupts the flow of ions, thus reducing the flow of current and activating the alarm." If you have both systems in your house, you're more likely to be warned by at least one.

Though the dock is designed to be used with the iPhone 5, it can connect to other devices via a USB port and the creators are planning versions for Windows and Android phones.

Outside of the home, this could be a great option for hotels or dorms where you might not be in a position to control the smoke alarm situation. In my opinion, anything that gives you just a little more warning than you would have had otherwise is worth it.

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### **Links:**

[1] <http://www.cdc.gov/homeandrecreationalafety/fire-prevention/fires-factsheet.html>

[2] <http://firemarshals.org/rfsi/smokealarmfacts.html>

[3] [http://www.indiegogo.com/projects/senseplus-smart-dock-smoke-gas-sensor-and-app?browse\\_v=new&c=home](http://www.indiegogo.com/projects/senseplus-smart-dock-smoke-gas-sensor-and-app?browse_v=new&c=home)

[4] <http://www.nfpa.org/itemDetail.asp?categoryID=1649&itemID=39909>