



Report Master
Inspections

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Information Sheet

Smoke Alarms



NSW Fire Brigades estimate that 59% of deaths from house fires occur during sleeping hours and still many homes across the State still do not have smoke alarms, leaving occupants at risk.

Regulation

In an effort to protect residents from this risk, the NSW Government introduced the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Smoke Alarms) Regulation 2006. This requires smoke alarms for all houses, flats and units that do not currently have them installed. The new regulation commenced on 1st May 2006 and the regulation requires that from 1st November 2006, all homes must be fitted with smoke alarms. It is also an offence to interfere with or remove any existing smoke alarm unless it is to repair, maintain or replace the alarm.

Type of alarms required

Smoke alarms must comply with the Australian Standard (AS3786-1993 – Smoke Alarms) to meet the new requirements. Alarms can be hard wired from the main electricity supply or battery operated. Battery operated alarms can be fitted by the homeowner but hard wired alarms must be fitted by a licensed electrician.

Where to locate

The number of alarms required in houses will depend on the size and layout of each particular home however, in houses, smoke alarms are required on or near the ceiling in the following areas:-

- In storeys containing bedrooms: in every corridor or hallway associated with a bedroom, or if there is no corridor or hallway, between the part of the home containing the bedroom and the rest of the dwelling; and

- In any storey not containing bedrooms. In these storeys, smoke alarms should be located in the path of travel most likely to be used when exiting the home.

Similar provisions apply in relation to home units and flats.

You can download an information sheet from the NSW Fire Brigades here. [Click here to download](#) or you can download a copy from our files and resources section on our web site.

FAQ

Q. Am I required to fit smoke alarms in my home?

A. New regulations requiring the installation of smoke alarms in ALL homes came into effect on 1st May 2006. Penalties apply for failing to install and maintain smoke alarms.

Q. How do I avoid 'false' alarms?

A. Smoke alarms are extremely sensitive and may detect smoke and moisture created by common household activities such as burnt toast or even steam from a bathroom. To reduce the likelihood of false alarms, the smoke alarms should, wherever possible, should not be located near cooking appliances or bathrooms. If false alarms persist, you may have to consider moving the alarm to a more suitable location. In any event, follow the manufacturer's guidelines at all times regarding positioning and locations of smoke alarms. If you have any concerns or doubts about the location of your smoke alarms, make further enquiries. See below for information on who you can contact for further information.

Tips for keeping your smoke alarms in working condition include;

- An alarm should be replaced at least every 10 years.
- Batteries should be changed once a year (or earlier if the low battery indicator shows battery is power is low).
- Test your alarm monthly and clean the grille to ensure it is dust free.
- Install in accordance with manufacturer's instructions and away from air conditioners and fluorescent lights.

For more information or assistance see the following;

NSW Smoke Alarm Requirements, go to www.planning.nsw.gov.au

For a full copy of the regulation, go to www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/maintop/search/inforce.

For more information on smoke alarms and other related topics, go to the NSW Fire Brigades website at: www.fire.nsw.gov.au/community

Enquiries can also be made on the Smoke Alarm Helpline on 1300 858 812 or email smoke.alarms@planning.nsw.gov.au.