

Smoke alarm requirements



New Requirements for Smoke Alarms in Residential Rental Properties Come into Force on 1 July 2016 – what you need to know

Do the new requirements apply to my rental property?

- > If your residential rental property is covered by the Residential Tenancies Act (RTA) the new requirements apply

Do I have to have smoke alarms in my rental property?

- > Yes, there must be at least one working smoke alarm in each bedroom or within 3 metres of each bedroom door
- > In self-contained caravans, sleep outs or similar there must be a minimum of one working smoke alarm
- > In multi-storey or multi-level homes there must be at least one smoke alarm on each level or storey

Who's responsible for replacing smoke alarm batteries?

- > Tenants are responsible for changing batteries in smoke alarms that are designed to have the battery changed during their tenancy.
- > Landlords are responsible for ensuring the smoke alarms are working at the beginning of every new tenancy.

What type of smoke alarms are required?

- > From 1 July 2016, if you are installing new smoke alarms or if you are replacing an existing smoke alarm, you must install photoelectric smoke alarms with long life batteries that have a life span of at least 8 years
- > There are many different brands of smoke alarms that meet the new requirements
- > The smoke alarms must be a photoelectric alarms with long life batteries and this will be displayed on the smoke alarm and its packaging



- > Smoke alarms must comply with one of the following manufacturing standards: Australian Standard AS3786:1993; or equivalent international standard: UL217 (USA), ULCS531 (Canada), BS5446: Part 1 (United Kingdom), BS EN 14604 (United Kingdom) or ISO12239 (International) – this should be prominently displayed on the packaging and on the alarm
- > If in doubt ask, the hardware retailer can advise which smoke alarms comply with the required standards

Where can you purchase long life photoelectric smoke alarms?

- > You can purchase long life photoelectric smoke alarms from any of the national hardware chains or your local hardware store

There is smoke alarms installed but they are not long life photoelectric smoke alarms do they need to be replaced?

- > If the alarms are in the required locations you do not have to replace them until they pass their recommended replacement date or they stop operating.
- > In many cases the replacement date will be listed on the alarm. If there is no replacement date on the alarm, the alarm is more than 8 years old, or you don't know how old the alarm is, you will need to replace the alarm to be certain you are complying with the regulations.

There is a hard wired alarm installed in my rental property, is this okay?

- > Yes, hardwired smoke alarms are an acceptable alternative and the same requirements that apply to photoelectric alarms also apply to hardwired alarms
- > The hardwired system must have sensors in each bedroom (or boarding room) or within 3 metres of each bedroom door and there must also be at least one smoke alarm installed on each storey or level

When will landlords have to replace long life photoelectric smoke alarms?

- > According to the manufacturing standard long life photoelectric alarms must have a service life of at least 8 years under normal conditions and have the date of manufacture marked – you should replace the smoke alarms within 8 years of the manufacture date or earlier if recommended by the manufacturer or if the low battery warning sounds.

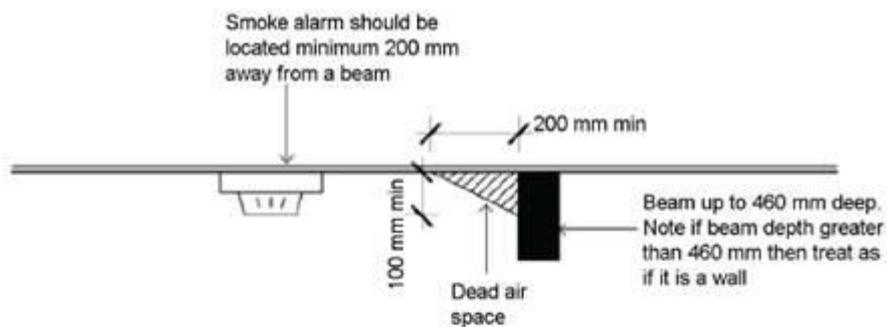
Where should smoke alarms be placed?

- > The illustrations below from New Zealand Standard 4514 provide a guide on where to place smoke alarms
- > The NZ Fire Service's website, www.fire.org also provides helpful information on the placement of smoke alarms
- > The residential tenancies regulations set out the **minimum** requirements for smoke alarms. The NZ Fire Service's recommendation to place smoke alarms in each bedroom and within 3 metres of each bedroom door is not a regulatory requirement, but you may wish to consider following this recommendation. Installing multiple alarms makes it more likely that the rental home and its occupants will be protected.

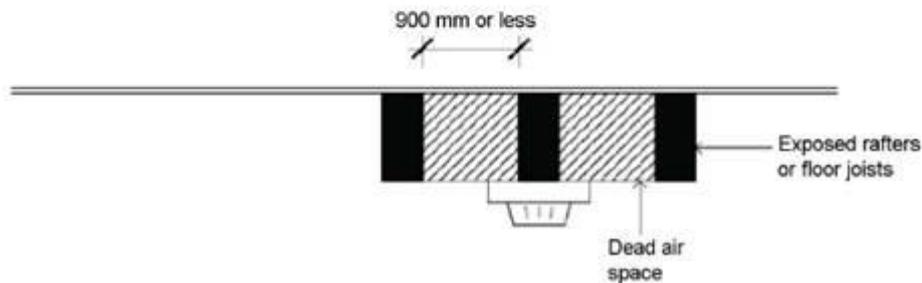
What requirements apply to boarding houses?

- > There must be at least one smoke alarm installed in each tenant's boarding room or within 3 metres of the entrance (or main entrance) to each tenant's boarding room
- > In addition, a smoke alarm must be installed on each storey or level of the boarding house, even if there isn't a boarding room on that level
- > Tenants are responsible for replacing smoke alarm batteries in their rooms.
- > Landlords are responsible for replacing smoke alarm batteries in common areas like hallways and the kitchen.

Illustrations highlighting best practice for installing smoke alarms in homes with particular construction styles



(d) Exposed beams (or other ceiling obstructions)



(e) Exposed rafters or floor joists

