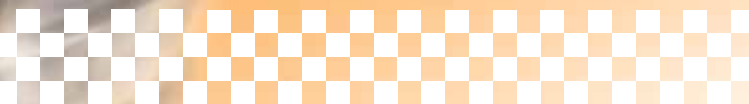


Department of Community Safety



Wake up to smoke alarms



All homes in Queensland **must** have a working smoke alarm

It's the law

Why?

Of the dozens of Australians who die in residential house fires each year, most die in fires that start at night when they are asleep.

Instead of waking you, smoke and toxic gases from a fire quickly numb your senses and put you into an even deeper sleep.

Working smoke alarms are a simple way to warn you of a developing fire and give you time to escape.

The more working smoke alarms installed, the greater your chance of survival.

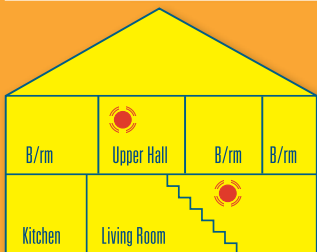
What do I have to do?

If your home was built after 1997, there should be 240 volt (hard-wired) smoke alarms installed at the time the premises was built. The number of alarms and their placement is set down under the Building Code of Australia (BCA).

Also homes having undertaken major renovations or extensions since 1997, should have included the installation of 240 volt (hard-wired) smoke alarms.

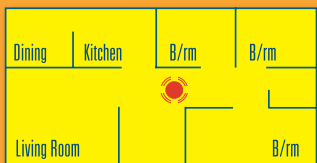
If your home was built before 1997 you must have, as a minimum, one alarm for each level of the dwelling. These can be battery-operated, although long-life batteries or hard-wired types are recommended for better protection.

Where do they need to go?



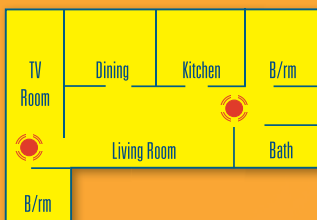
Near bedrooms and on every storey of a multi-level house

Minimum by law



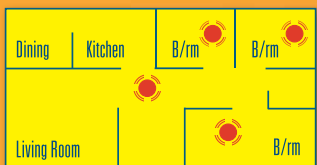
Between the bedrooms and the rest of the house

Minimum by law



Additional alarms are needed in homes with separated sleeping areas

Minimum by law



Inside the bedroom if you are a heavy sleeper or if you close the door

Additional recommendation for added safety (not law)

Smoke alarms should be positioned on flat ceilings away from corners, exposed beams or any other fixture that may deflect smoke.

For advice, contact your local fire station or a reputable fire protection company.

What type of smoke alarm?

Photoelectric

- Also called optical;
- Detect larger smoke particles;
- No radioactive material;
- Best suited to detect smouldering fires (the most common domestic fire);
- Not as prone to cooking nuisance alarms;
- Ideal near kitchens and living areas.

Ionisation

- Most common household variety;
- Detect small smoke particles;
- Should not be used near cooking, combustion heating appliances or garage areas;
- Most effective with fast flaming fires with little visible smoke;
- Ideal for sleeping areas.

Photoelectric smoke alarms give better warning of more types of fire than other kinds of alarms. For this reason, photoelectric smoke alarms are strongly recommended by all fire services in Australia..

For more information on smoke alarms go to www.fire.qld.gov.au or ring 1300 369 003

Smoke alarms for deaf and hearing impaired people

If you cannot hear a standard smoke alarm you may be eligible for financial assistance to help buy special smoke alarms designed for people who are deaf or hearing impaired. For more information go to www.fire.qld.gov.au or contact (07) 3635 1952.

What about maintenance?

Only working smoke alarms save lives

They should be tested and cleaned regularly

- Test smoke alarms once a month using the test button.
- Clean the grill of your smoke alarm once a month using a vacuum cleaner or soft brush.
- Replace alkaline type 9v batteries every year – using an anniversary date to remember.
- Write the year the smoke alarm was made in permanent ink on the base of the alarm.
- Replace smoke alarms every 5 - 8 years or according to manufacturer's instructions

Never paint smoke alarms

Power supply options for smoke alarms

- Hard-wired 240 volt power supply with battery backup.
- Long-life lithium battery. Lasts for 10 years.
- Battery operated – 9 volt battery with low power warning signal should last at least 12 months



Only use smoke alarms that
comply with Australian Standards
– look for these marks.

What if I am a landlord?

You are required to install and maintain smoke alarms in your rental property.

- The minimum legal requirement is an alarm in accordance with the smoke alarm Australian Standard. This can be met by a 9v battery operated smoke alarm, with a one year battery for dwellings built before 1997. However, a good quality 10 year battery alarm or hard-wired alarm is more reliable and may be more effective in the long term. Homes built after 1997 must have hard-wired alarms fitted.
- You must test and clean each smoke alarm within 30 days before the start of a tenancy agreement.
- In addition you must replace, in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions, each battery in the smoke alarm that is flat or that you or your agent is aware is almost flat within 30 days before the start of a tenancy.
- You must replace the smoke alarm unit before it reaches the end of its service life. Service life of a smoke alarm is usually indicated by the warranty offered by its manufacturer.
- If your smoke alarm reaches the end of its service life, you must replace it immediately.
- Where notified by a tenant that a smoke alarm is not operating, you should have the smoke alarm checked by a competent professional, and as required, repaired or replaced.
- If your property is managed by an agent, they may be able to arrange for this to be done to ensure your legislative requirement is met.

How are smoke alarm laws enforced?

On the sale of a property, the vendor must lodge a form with the Queensland Land Registry (www.nrw.qld.gov.au), stating that smoke alarms are installed in the property and the purchaser has been informed smoke alarms are installed.

Fire Officers will also investigate complaints received. There is a maximum fine of \$500 for failing to install smoke alarms.

What if I am a tenant?

- You are required by law to test and clean each smoke alarm in the dwelling at least once every 12 months.
- You are required by law to replace, in accordance with the information statement (RTA Form 17a) provided to you, each battery that is flat or is almost flat during your tenancy.
- If you become aware that a smoke alarm in the rental property is not working, other than because the battery is flat or almost flat, you must advise the landlord or agent as soon as practicable.
- Your landlord is only required by law to test and clean smoke alarm/s at the start of each new tenancy agreement. If the property is managed by an agent, they may arrange for this to be done.

Please note that for public housing tenants the State Government has already installed hard-wired smoke alarms in all public housing dwellings.

Insurance-Tenants

Research indicates that nearly half of all renters do not have insurance of any kind.

To protect your personal possessions you should have your own contents insurance.

Insurance- Property Owners

Industry figures show that people underinsure.

Adequate insurance cover can provide peace of mind if your home and belongings are damaged or lost to fire.

Most insurance companies offer specific landlord policies.

As a property owner your home insurance policy could be affected by whether you have a smoke alarm installed.

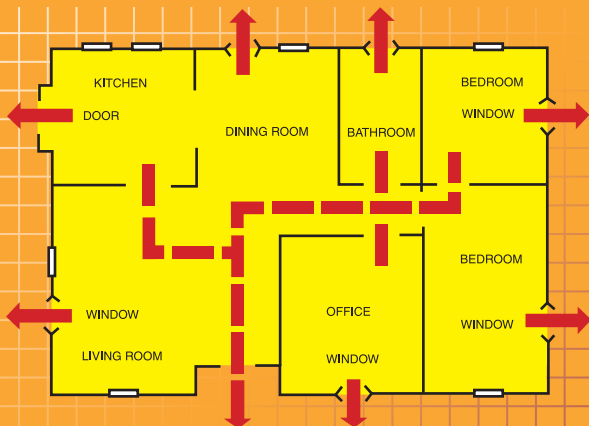
Check with your specific insurance provider.

Do I need a fire escape plan?

A smoke alarm will alert you to a fire, but what you do next is a matter of life and death.

To survive it is essential you have a fire escape plan.

1. Draw your escape plan on a sheet of paper;
2. Plan two ways out of every room;
3. Pick a meeting place outside the home, such as the letterbox;
4. Ring the fire service on 000 (triple zero);
5. Practise your fire escape plan regularly, at night, with the lights off;
6. Practise your escape on hands and knees.



safehome

Safehome is a FREE service provided by the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service to householders in an urban fire service area. Local firefighters will come to your home to assist you to recognise fire and safety hazards in and around the home. Once the hazards are identified you can then take steps to eliminate them. A visit should take no longer than 45 minutes.

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You will receive advice on correct positioning and installation of smoke alarms, a safety pack and checklist.