

Smoke Alarms



WELLINGTON
SHIRE COUNCIL
The Heart of Gippsland

Legislation introduced in February 1999 requires self contained smoke alarms complying with Australian Standard 3786-1993, to be installed in all dwellings or sole occupancy units (flats, town houses, units) in appropriate locations on or near the ceiling of every storey. Statistics have proved that the installation and correct operation of a smoke alarm has saved many lives since the legislation was introduced.

Smoke alarms installed in existing buildings (or parts) are only required to have an internal battery power supply. If you construct a new dwelling or additions the smoke alarms are required to be hard wired.

It is the owner's (landlord's) responsibility to install smoke alarms in rented premises.

Location

House fires are life threatening, particularly at night when you are sleeping. Smoke from a fire will not normally wake you when you are asleep. In deciding on the position of smoke alarms it is important to remember that they are intended to detect smoke before it reaches the sleeping occupants of a building. The ensuing alarm is designed to wake the occupants and give them time to evacuate the building.



Maintenance of Smoke Detectors

For smoke alarms to be effective, it is important that they are adequately maintained.

The operation of most smoke alarms can be readily checked by depressing a button on the outside of the alarm.

The battery in most smoke alarms will need to be renewed on an annual basis (lithium batteries lasting up to seven years are also available). Smoke alarms should emit a warning sound when the battery needs replacement. The alarm should also be cleaned annually. This usually involves carefully vacuuming to remove dust particles that may affect the operation of the unit.

Hard Wired Smoke Alarms

As of 14 June 2006, all Class 1b (bed and breakfast), 3 (accommodation, motel) or a 9a (residential care) buildings constructed, or for which a building approval or building permit was granted before 1 August 1997,

must have the smoke alarms changed to be hard wired (powered from the mains electricity power supply). The smoke alarms must be installed in appropriate locations on or near the ceiling of every storey of the building and comply with Australian Standard 3786-1993.

Alternatively you may install a smoke detection system complying with AS 1670.1- 2004 Fire detection, warning, control and intercom systems-System design, installation and commissioning-Part 1: Fire, published 29 April 2004.

As these installations relate to an “essential safety measure” a building permit must be obtained prior to the installation to ensure that the locations are in accordance with the Building Regulations. Please contact a Private Building Surveyor.

A fine imposed by the courts of up to \$500 could be imposed on an owner who fails to comply with the smoke alarm requirements of the Building Regulations or an on-the-spot fine of \$210.00 can be imposed if the alarms are not installed.

Who is the Owner?

The Building Regulations 2006 define the owner in relation to a dwelling, a sole occupancy unit or a building as follows:

- In the case of a dwelling, sole occupancy unit or a building being purchased under a terms contract (as defined in section 2 of the *Sale of Land Act 1962*) under which the purchaser has become entitled to possession or to the receipt of the rents and profits, the purchaser of that dwelling, sole occupancy unit or a building
- In the case of any other dwelling, sole occupancy unit or a building, the owner of that dwelling, sole occupancy unit or building

Helpful Links

[Country Fire Authority](#)

[Metropolitan Fire and Emergency Services Board \(MFB\)](#)

[Building Commission](#)

If you require any further information about anything included in this fact file please contact the Building Services at the Wellington Shire Council on 1300 366 244.

