

Most deaths by fire in the home occur when residents are asleep. While people are sleeping they cannot smell smoke or detect fire.

To protect people and reduce the threat of death by fire or smoke inhalation, smoke alarms **MUST BE**:

- Properly installed
- Regularly inspected
- Adequately maintained.

A working smoke alarm produces a highly audible sound when triggered by the presence of smoke.

Please note: There is a specific smoke alarm designed for people with hearing disabilities.

State government legislation requires:

- All new residences to have self-contained smoke alarms installed and connected to mains power
- All existing residential properties to have smoke alarms fitted including rental properties (these alarms may be battery operated).

It is important to note:

- Existing residences are only required to have smoke alarms installed with an internal battery power supply
- Residential properties are defined as those where people sleep
- Smoke alarms are available from all hardware stores and larger variety stores at reasonable prices.

Fitting smoke alarms

Smoke alarms must be located where they can detect smoke before it reaches people sleeping in the building. When the alarm sounds, people wake up and then safely evacuate the building.

Regulations require alarms to be located in specific areas. These vary according to the type of building (i.e. single storey, multi-storey, hotels, caravans, mobile homes). All alarms must comply with the following regulations:

- Fitted within 1.5m of bedroom doors and between bedrooms and the remainder of the dwelling in hallways
- In multi-storeyed buildings, be in the path of travel most likely to be used in an evacuation (to ensure the alarm is raised before the common exit path is rendered impassable)
- On a central location in storeys not connected to the main building (e.g. lower floor garages)
- Audible in all areas of the building, especially sleeping areas
- Not mounted in dead air space such as the apex of a cathedral ceiling, corner junction of walls and ceilings or between exposed floor joints.

Regular maintenance is a must

- Smoke alarms *must* be tested regularly. This can be done simply by depressing the test button.
- Smoke alarms *must* be cleaned annually (using a vacuum cleaner) and the batteries changed each year. A good time to do this is on the last day of daylight saving.
- Smoke alarms *should not* be mounted where false alarms could trigger them, such as areas like kitchens or bathrooms where burning toast or steam will cause the alarm to activate.

Please note: There are special smoke detectors designed specifically for kitchen installation should you wish to fit them as an extra precaution.