

## How do I maintain my smoke alarms?

### NSW Fire Brigades recommend:

All of your smoke alarms should be tested at least every month to ensure that the battery and the alarm sounder are working.

Every six months you should clean your smoke alarm with your vacuum cleaner.



If your smoke alarm has a removable alkaline battery, you should replace the battery once a year. Change your battery when you change your clock at the end of Daylight Saving or earlier if required.

If your smoke alarm uses a lithium battery it will not need replacing annually as the battery is built into the alarm and the entire unit will need replacing every 10 years.

Replace your smoke alarm with a new unit every 10 years. Smoke alarms do not last forever – the sensitivity in all smoke alarms will reduce over time.

All smoke alarms will sound a short beep approximately every 60 seconds to alert you that the battery power is low and the battery needs replacing. See the manufacturer's specifications for instructions.

# NSW FIRE BRIGADES



Proud supporter of NSW Fire Brigades in Community Fire Safety

#### Manufacturers, suppliers and distributors of:

- > Smoke alarms, smoke detectors and fire control panels
- > Hearing impaired warning systems
- > Visual warning and sounding devices
- > Emergency warning and evacuation systems

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#### NSW FIRE BRIGADES FIRE SAFETY AND PREVENTION

- > IN THE HOME
- > FOR SENIORS
- > LIVING NEAR THE BUSH
- > SMOKE ALARMS IN THE HOME

You can obtain a copy of any of these brochures by calling us on **02 9255 2999**, visiting your local Fire Station or from our website [www.fire.nsw.gov.au](http://www.fire.nsw.gov.au)



v.1.0 March 2008

# NSW FIRE BRIGADES

## FIRE SAFETY AND PREVENTION

## SMOKE ALARMS IN THE HOME



**PREVENTPREPAREPROTECT.**

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**Smoke Alarms**

# It's the Law!

Legislation requires all NSW residents must have at least one working smoke alarm installed on each level of their home which meets the requirements of Australian Standard AS 3786.

*This includes owner occupied, rental properties, relocatable homes or any other residential building where people sleep.*

**Why do I need a smoke alarm?**

Smoke alarms are life-saving devices that provide benefits for occupants. They detect smoke well before any sleeping occupant would and provide critical seconds to implement actions to save life and property. Smoke alarms are designed to detect fire smoke and emit a loud and distinctive sound to alert occupants of potential danger.

Smoke alarms have been mandatory for all new buildings since 1996. It may be time to replace your alarm if it is 10 years old.

If you have a working smoke alarm you are reducing the fire risk to yourself and your family.

**NSW Fire Brigades recommends**

To maximise the opportunity for early warning in all fire scenarios, NSWFB recommends the installation of photoelectric alarms, hard wired and interconnected, in all residential accommodation.

**What type of alarm does my family need?**

Most adults with normal hearing will be woken by a smoke alarm, but children under 16, elderly people and people with hearing impairments may not.

There are smoke alarms available:

- for use in kitchens and caravans
- incorporating an emergency light, and
- manufactured specifically for the hearing impaired.

**Where can I get a smoke alarm?**

Smoke alarms can be purchased from:

- hardware stores
- building supply stores
- electrical retailers, and
- most department stores.

**Where should I install them?**

Most battery-powered smoke alarms can be easily installed by the home owner or a maintenance contractor and do not require professional installation.

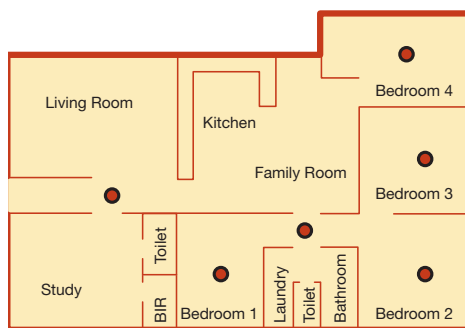
Hard-wired smoke alarms, however, will need to be installed by a licensed professional.

Always install a smoke alarm in accordance with their instructions.

Smoke alarms are usually most effective when located on the ceiling, preferably away from walls and fittings.

**Bedrooms + 1**

Although legislation states a minimum requirement of at least one smoke alarm per floor, NSWFB recommends the installation of smoke alarms in all bedrooms as well as positioning one alarm to detect smoke before it reaches sleeping occupants ie between bedrooms and the kitchen where the majority of fires start.



● Smoke Alarm

**How do I dispose of my smoke alarm?**

Photo-electric smoke alarms in any quantity may be disposed of in domestic waste.

If you have less than ten ionisation smoke alarms to dispose of you may dispose of them in your domestic waste. If you have ten or more you should contact your local council. This is due to the small amount of radioactive material used in ionisation alarms.

**What else can I do?**

**Escape Plans**

Every household should develop and practise a home fire escape plan. Accidental home fires by their very nature can catch people unaware.

Without an escape plan you are placing the lives of everybody in your home in jeopardy.

Remember adults will need to wake children and help them to escape the fire.

**Plan your actions before a fire happens! Follow these points:**

- Draw a floor plan of your home
- Draw your escape plan and when complete place it somewhere prominent in your household to keep fresh in your mind (for example, on your fridge)
- Make sure you include two means of escape from each room
- Discuss it with other occupants
- Make sure that windows and screens can be easily opened
- Provide alternatives for anyone with a disability
- Decide on a safe outside meeting place eg near the letterbox and phone **Triple Zero (000)** from a safe phone
- Once you get out, **STAY OUT**, never go back inside a burning building
- Practise your plan at least twice a year, making sure that everyone is involved.

