

Smoke Alarm Installation in Homes

Alterations to existing buildings require an upgrade (to the latest cited standards) to the means of escaping in the event of a fire. All new houses and all existing houses undergoing alterations are required to have smoke alarms installed.

The applicable Compliance Document (Acceptable Solution) to the Building Code is F7/AS1 – Warning Systems (refer to section 3.2, 'Type 1 Domestic Smoke Alarm System').

- NOTE:**
- Since July 2016, smoke alarms are compulsory in all rental homes.
 - Landlords must have the right type of smoke alarms installed in the right places to meet new regulations which came into force on 1 July 2016. Both landlords and tenants now have responsibilities to keep smoke alarms working.
 - These regulations apply to any residential rental covered by the Residential Tenancies Act including rental homes, boarding houses and rental caravans, sleep-outs and similar.

Summary of Requirements:

- Smoke alarms shall be manufactured to one of the following approved Standards:
 - AS 37896:1993
 - ISO 12239:2003
 - BS EN 14604:2005
- Smoke alarms shall have a test facility located on the smoke alarm readily accessible to building occupants (this facility may be located on the smoke alarms). *Refer to F7/AS1, 3.2.4.*
- Smoke alarms shall be either hard wired or battery powered and are not required to be interconnected. In addition, they shall be provided with a hush facility (being a button) that silences the alarm for a minimum duration of 60 seconds. *Refer to F7/AS1, 3.2.3.*

Smoke Alarm Location:

On levels containing the sleeping spaces, the smoke alarms shall be located either:

- (a) In every sleeping space, **or**
- (b) Within 3.0m of every sleeping space door.

Plus

- (a) There must be at least one smoke alarm on each level within the household unit.
- (b) Smoke alarms must be audible to sleeping occupants through closed doors.
- (c) Sleep-outs are a part of the household unit so must be included in any provision of smoke alarms.
- (d) Smoke alarms shall be installed on or near the ceiling in accordance with NZS4514 and the manufacturer's instructions.

Recommended maintenance procedures are:

- (a) Monthly testing by use of the smoke alarm's test facility.
- (b) In-situ six-monthly inspection and cleaning (no disassembly of smoke alarm) using the soft brush attachment of a household vacuum cleaner attachment to remove any dust, cobwebs, insects or the like.