

DOMESTIC SMOKE ALARMS SOUTH AUSTRALIAN LEGISLATION

Since legislation is often written in language that is hard to understand, the following is a plain language interpretation of the legislative requirements.

What types of buildings are required to have smoke alarms?

Regulation 76B of the Regulations under the Development Act, 1993 requires that smoke alarms complying with Australian Standard 3786 be fitted to all “Class 1 and 2 buildings.”

Compliance with Australian Standard 3786 will be shown on the smoke alarm packaging.

“Class 1 and 2 buildings” means:

- Any single dwelling including detached houses or attached houses such as row houses, terrace houses, town houses, villa units, etc.
- A boarding house, guest house, hostel or the like with a total floor area not exceeding 300m² and in which not more than 12 persons would ordinarily be resident.
Note: Larger buildings of these types will require a commercial type fire alarm system.
- Any building containing 2 or more *sole-occupancy units* each being a separate dwelling (ie. flats, motel units, apartments and the like) where the building is not required to be fitted with a commercial type fire alarm system.

New Buildings - Building Approval on or after 1st January 1995

Since the 1st January 1995, smoke alarms have been required in all new homes in South Australia. These alarms must be hard wired to the 240 volt mains power supply unless the dwelling is not connected to such a supply. They should also be fitted with a battery to provide power in case of a supply failure. In dwellings not connected to mains power, the South Australian Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) recommends the installation of smoke alarms powered by 10 year life, non-replaceable, non-removable, permanently connected batteries.

Smoke Alarms – SA Legislation

Existing Buildings – Building approval before 1st January 1995

Change Of Ownership on or after 1st February 1998

From the 1st February 1998, if the land on which any building covered by this legislation is built undergoes a change of ownership (whether before or after 1st January 2000), the new owner must, within 6 months of title transfer, install smoke alarms either:

- hard wired to the 240 volt household power supply (unless the dwelling is not connected to such a supply); or
- powered by 10 year life, non-replaceable, non-removable, permanently connected batteries.

No Change Of Ownership since 1st February 1998

All existing buildings to which this legislation applies, unless subject to other requirements listed above, must be fitted with smoke alarms by **1st January 2000**. These alarms may, as a minimum, be powered by a 9 volt battery.

How many smoke alarms and where?

Every dwelling must be assessed individually to ensure that in the event of a fire occupants of every bedroom in the dwelling will receive an audible warning so that they may safely evacuate.

Some general considerations:

- The smoke alarms should be positioned to protect the escape routes from the bedrooms. In a passage way the alarm should be between the living area and the first bedroom.
- If bedrooms are located in separate parts of the dwelling the escape route from each sleeping area should be protected by at least one smoke alarm.
- If the dwelling is two- or multi-storeyed, in addition to the above considerations, smoke alarms should be located on each level in the vicinity of the stairs to ensure early warning of fire outbreak on a level not currently occupied.
- Where more than one smoke alarm is required, the MFS strongly recommends that they be *interconnected*. Interconnected alarms sound simultaneously when one of them senses smoke thus warning occupants in all parts of the dwelling.
Note: Not all smoke alarms are interconnectable. Ensure that you buy interconnectable alarms for this purpose.

For further advice ring the Community Safety Department 8204 3611

Country callers 1300 737 637

e-mail communitysafety@samfs.sa.gov.au or

visit our website www.mfs.sa.gov.au

or call in to 99 Wakefield Street, Adelaide during business hours.