



New smoke alarm legislation

Autumn 2017

Smoke alarms save lives. Reports have found that the risk of death in a house fire is reduced by more than half if properly maintained smoke alarms are installed.

Queensland now has the most comprehensive smoke alarm legislation in Australia after coronial recommendations into the tragic death of 11 people in a Slacks Creek house fire in 2011.

The *Fire and Emergency Services (Domestic Smoke Alarms) Amendment Act 2016 (Qld)* commenced 1 January 2017 and imposes additional obligations on property owners/managers with regard to the installation and maintenance of smoke alarms at domestic dwellings.

If existing smoke alarms were manufactured less than 10 years ago, and are still in good working order, they will comply with the new legislative requirements.

However, it is important for property owners/managers as well as tenants to understand the new requirements and the timeframes that apply.

For properties being sold or leased, or if an existing lease is renewed, the new laws require that:

From 1 January 2017

- When replacing smoke alarms, they must be of a photoelectric type which complies with Australian Standard (AS) 3786-2014.
- Existing smoke alarms, manufactured more than 10 years ago, must be replaced (Note: smoke alarms should have the date of manufacture stamped on them).
- Smoke alarms that do not operate when tested must be replaced immediately.
- Existing hardwired smoke alarms, that need replacing, must be replaced with a hardwired photoelectric smoke alarm.

From 1 January 2022

Smoke alarms in homes must adhere to each of the following:

- be photoelectric (AS 3786-2014)
- not also contain an ionisation sensor
- be less than 10 years old
- operate when tested
- be interconnected with every other smoke alarm in the dwelling (all activate together)
- be either hardwired or powered by a non-removable 10-year battery.

Smoke alarms must be installed on each storey:

- in each bedroom
- in hallways which connect bedrooms and the rest of the property (if there is no hallway, between the bedrooms and other parts of the storey)
- if there are no bedrooms on a storey, at least one smoke alarm must be installed in the most likely path of travel to exit the dwelling.

In addition to the above, property owners/managers must:

- test and clean smoke alarms and replace any flat or nearly flat batteries within 30 days before the start or renewal of a tenancy
- not remove a smoke alarm or a battery (other than to replace it), or do anything to reduce the effectiveness of the alarm e.g. paint it.

Tenants must:

- test and clean (by vacuuming or dusting) smoke alarms at least once every 12 months
- replace any flat or nearly flat batteries
- advise the property owner/manager if there is any issue with the alarm (apart from batteries)
- allow the property owner/manager right of entry to install smoke alarms.
- not remove a smoke alarm or the battery (other than to replace it), or do anything to reduce the effectiveness of the alarm e.g. paint it.

Find out more about the new smoke alarm legislation from [Queensland Fire and Emergency Services](#).

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