



Smoke Alarms

New smoke alarm requirements

For 'shared accommodation' buildings

Factsheet 2 • March 2006

In a bid to enhance life safety and minimise further loss of life from building fires, the NSW Government recently introduced the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Smoke Alarm) Regulation 2006. This requires smoke alarms in 'shared accommodation' buildings (as described below) that do not have smoke alarms or smoke detection and alarm systems installed.

The new regulation commences on 1 May 2006 and building owners are encouraged to take action to install smoke alarms as soon as possible.

This fact sheet provides the information you need to prepare for the new requirements. A full copy of the regulation is available on NSW Parliamentary Counsel's Office website listed below.

New smoke alarm requirements

Owners of certain 'shared accommodation' buildings will need to install smoke alarms in their buildings. Owners of buildings that have smoke alarms or smoke detection and alarm systems installed in accordance with a previous or current requirement need take no additional action.

Building types required to have smoke alarms:

The new smoke alarm requirements apply to the following building types (as classified under the Building Code of Australia):

- **small boarding houses, hostels, backpacker accommodation, bed and breakfast accommodation** etc. (Class 1b buildings)



- **large boarding houses, guest houses, hostels, backpacker accommodation; residential parts of hotels, motels, schools, health care buildings and detention centres; certain accommodation for the aged, children and people with disabilities** etc. (Class 3 buildings)
- **nursing homes and hospitals** (Class 9a health care buildings).

Requirements also apply to other building types (Class 1a, 2 buildings and Class 4 parts of buildings and relocatable homes) as outlined in Factsheet 1 'New smoke alarm requirements: owners of houses, residential flats and units', available from the NSW Department of Planning website listed below.

Type of smoke alarms required

A smoke alarm that complies with the Australian Standard (AS) 3786-1993, *Smoke Alarms*, which should be noted on the product packaging, that is hard-wired (powered from the mains electricity supply) or powered by a non-removable 10-year life battery that is permanently connected will meet the new requirements.

For more information about types of smoke alarms, see the NSW Fire Brigades website listed below.

Cost of smoke alarms and installation

Smoke alarms required for these types of buildings come in a range of styles and prices. Most battery-powered smoke alarms (refer to comments above) can be installed by building owners or maintenance staff. However hard-wired smoke alarms need to be installed by a licensed professional.



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Where to buy smoke alarms

Smoke alarms are available at most hardware and building supply stores. Ask your supplier about what they carry and whether their product range meets AS 3786 and if they carry products that meet the required 10-year battery or mains electricity power requirements.

Where to locate smoke alarms to meet the new requirement

The number of smoke alarms required will depend on the size, layout and other building requirements of each particular building.

For **small boarding houses, hostels, backpacker accommodation and bed and breakfast accommodation** etc. (Class 1b buildings), smoke alarms are required on or near the ceiling in the following areas:

- in storeys containing bedrooms: in every bedroom, corridor or hallway associated with a bedroom, or, if there is no corridor or hallway, between the part of the building containing the bedroom and the rest of the building
- in storeys without bedrooms: in the path of travel most likely to be used by those evacuating the building.

For **large boarding houses, guest houses, hostels, backpacker accommodation; residential parts of hotels, motels, schools, health care buildings, detention centres; certain accommodation for the aged, children and people with disabilities** etc. (Class 3 buildings), smoke alarms are required on or near the ceiling in the following areas of each sole occupancy unit:

- in any storey containing bedrooms smoke alarms must be located in every corridor or hallway between the part containing the bedroom and, if there is no corridor or hallway, between the part of the unit containing the bedroom and the rest of the dwelling, and
- in any storey not containing bedrooms. In these storeys smoke alarms should be located in the path of travel most likely to be used by those evacuating the unit.

If the building is not sprinkler protected, they must also be installed in each habitable room not within a sole-occupancy unit (eg common recreation and dining

rooms) and in each public corridor and other internal public space (eg foyer, lobby, internal stairway). The alarms are required to be located in accordance with the location requirements for smoke detectors of AS 1670.

For **nursing homes and hospitals** (Class 9a buildings), smoke alarms are required on or near the ceiling in the patient care area (excluding any bathroom, ensuite bathing area or toilet area) and associated public corridors and internal public spaces. The alarms are required to be located in accordance with the location requirements for smoke detectors of AS 1670.

Penalties for non-compliance

The new smoke alarm requirements will rely primarily on community support for implementing this important legislation. While the regulation does not include any new inspection powers, it does include provisions for fines to be issued for failure to install smoke alarms after a six month compliance period. Also, from 1 May 2006, it will be an offence to interfere with or remove an existing smoke alarm, unless it is to repair, maintain or replace the alarm.

Public education will be carried out to assist NSW building owners to comply with the new requirements.

For more information or assistance

For all of the latest information about the new NSW smoke alarm requirements, see www.planning.nsw.gov.au.

For a full copy of the regulation, see www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/maintop/search/inforce.

For more information on smoke alarms and other related topics, see the NSW Fire Brigades website at: www.fire.nsw.gov.au/community/athome/smokealarms/.

Enquiries: phone the Smoke Alarm Helpline on 1300 858 812 or email smoke.alarms@planning.nsw.gov.au.

Important note: This advisory note does not constitute legal advice. Readers are advised to seek professional advice and refer to the relevant legislation, as necessary, before taking action in relation to any matters covered by this publication.

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