

FACT SHEET

Purchasing a Smoke Alarm

Smoke alarms are a normal part of many Australian homes, where they have been responsible for saving lives. Regulations vary from state to state, but in most states it is now mandatory to install at least one smoke alarm.

Where can I buy a smoke alarm?

- Fire Protection Companies - FPA Australia member companies can provide advice, service and sell smoke alarms to the public - see www.fpaa.com.au/providers and choose your state.
- Department Stores
- Hardware Stores
- Electrical Retailers
- Some public fire brigades also sell smoke alarms

Caution is advised when dealing with telephone canvassers and door-to-door vendors.

How do I choose between brands?

Only smoke alarms that have been certified as meeting the requirements of the Australian Standard and carry the Standards Australia Tick Mark or are ActivFire listed should be used. (See www.fpaa.com.au/certification and click on the "ActivFire" link).

Ionisation or photoelectric?

There are two types of residential smoke alarms: Ionisation and Photoelectric. Photoelectric alarms are superior to ionisation smoke alarms in detecting the visible smoke produced by smouldering fires. For more information on the differences between photoelectric and ionisation smoke detectors, please see our 'Smoke Alarms - Ionisation or Photoelectric?' Fact Sheet.

Power supply options?

Most Smoke alarms are available with the following power source options:

- Hardwired 240 volt powered with 9 volt back-up battery (battery needs replacing annually).
- Hardwired with 240 volt powered with lithium rechargeable battery back-up (battery lasts life of the alarm).
- Battery powered 9 bolt (battery life typically one year -needs changing annually).
- Battery powered 10-year lithium (battery lasts the life of the smoke alarm).

More information over page...../



Smoke alarms can be purchased from department and hardware stores, as well as electrical retailers.



Only purchase smoke alarms that carry the Australian Standards tick mark or are suitably certified or listed.



Photoelectric smoke alarms are superior to ionisation alarms in detecting visible smoke produced by a smouldering fire.

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Legislation since 1995 requires new residences to be fitted with a smoke alarm wired to the mains electricity.



It is a good idea to install a heat alarm in the kitchen.

Hardwired smoke alarms have a more reliable power source but must be installed by a licensed electrician. Other options available include interconnected models, which when any one alarm detects smoke, all connected smoke alarms will sound, providing a warning throughout the home. Special models for use in caravans, and models incorporating an emergency light are also available.

How many do I need?

Legislation since 1995 in all states requires new residences to be fitted with a smoke alarm wired to the mains electricity. Some states have also legislated that all residences require a minimum of one battery operated smoke alarm.

Note: The fitting of one alarm will only provide a minimum level of protection.

A better level of protection is gained by installing a smoke alarm in each bedroom, in corridors and hallways that lead to exits and the living area. Installing a heat alarm in the kitchen is also a good idea. FPA Australia recommends that smoke alarms installed in corridors and hallways between sleeping areas and exits are photoelectric smoke alarms.

Australian and international research indicates that more than 90% of children under the age of 16 will not wake from deep sleep from a smoke alarm sounding in their bedroom. This is why multiple interconnected smoke alarms are a great way to maximise the chance of waking sleeping children or other occupants with a hearing impairment. An interconnected smoke alarm in the master bedroom will alert parents who can then assist others to escape.

Alarms for the hearing impaired

Warning devices are available for the hearing impaired and information on these alarms can be obtained from deaf associations in each state. See www.deafblind.com/australia.html for links.

FPA Australia

PO Box 1049
Box Hill VIC 3128

T: 03 9890 1544
F: 03 9890 1577
E: technical@fpaa.com.au
W: www.fpaa.com.au
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Also see:

Smoke Alarm - Installation & Maintenance.

Smoke Alarm - Ionisation or Photoelectric?

Fire Extinguishers—Types & Uses
