



Fire Prevention/Technical Services Division Fact Sheet

What a Single-Family Homeowner Needs to Know About the Smoke Detectors Act

The Smoke Detector Act (425 ILCS 60/) addresses the requirement for smoke alarms in one- and two-family homes. Smoke alarms shall be provided as follows:

- Within 15 feet of every room used for sleeping purposes.
- On every story of the dwelling unit, including basements but not including unoccupied attics.

The detector shall be installed on the ceiling and at least 6 inches from any wall, or on a wall located between 4 and 6 inches from the ceiling.

For dwelling units with split levels, a smoke alarm shall be installed on the upper level if the lower level is less than one full story below the upper level; however, if there is an intervening door between the adjacent levels, a smoke detector shall be installed on each level.

For dwelling units in existence on July 1, 1988 smoke alarms may be battery powered or wired into the building's electrical system and need not be interconnected.

For dwelling units newly constructed, reconstructed, or substantially remodeled after December 31, 1987, the smoke alarms shall be permanently wired into the building's electrical system and if more than one smoke alarm is required, the smoke alarms shall be wired so that the initiation of one smoke alarm will initiate all the smoke alarms in the dwelling unit.

For any dwelling units newly constructed, reconstructed, or substantially remodeled after January 1, 2011, smoke alarms permanently wired into the building's electrical system must also maintain an alternative back-up power source, which may be either batteries or an emergency generator.

¹For the purpose of this document in reflection of the Act; the terms "detector" and "alarm" are interchangeable and mean a device that senses smoke and produces a localized alarm.

Effective January 1, 2023, single and multi-family homes that are still using smoke alarms with removable batteries are required to install new alarms that feature 10-year sealed battery alarms.

(425 ILCS 60/3) Smoke Detector Act

(e) The requirements of this Section shall apply to any dwelling unit in existence on July 1, 1988, beginning on that date. Except as provided in subsections (f) and (g) , the smoke detectors required in such dwelling units may be either: battery powered provided the battery is a self-contained, non-removable, long-term battery, or wired into the structure's AC power line, and need not be interconnected.

- 1) The battery requirements of this Section shall apply to battery-powered smoke detectors that: (A) are in existence and exceed 10 years from the date of their being manufactured; (B) fails to respond to operability tests or otherwise malfunctions; or (C) are newly installed.
- 2) The battery requirements of this Section do not apply to: (A) a fire alarm, smoke detector, smoke alarm, or ancillary component that is electronically connected as a part of a centrally monitored or supervised alarm system; (B) a fire alarm, smoke detector, smoke alarm, or ancillary component that uses: (i) a low-power radio frequency wireless communication signal, or (ii) Wi-Fi or other wireless Local Area Networking capability to send and receive notifications to and from the internet, such as early low battery warnings before the device reaches a critical low power level; or (C) such other devices as the State Fire Marshal shall designate through its regulatory process.

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