

STATE LAW REQUIRES SMOKE ALARMS IN EXISTING RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS

Effective March 14, 2007, state law requires smoke alarms in all existing residential buildings constructed prior to November 6, 1974. Residential buildings constructed on or after November 6, 1974 were already required to have smoke alarms at the time of construction.

This legislation was enacted in recognition of the fire safety benefits smoke alarms provide. Homes with smoke alarms typically have a death rate that is 40-50% less than the rate for homes without alarms.

If your residence was constructed prior to November 6, 1974 the following rules (excerpted from the Michigan Building, Residential and Rehabilitation Codes) now apply:

Within each dwelling unit or sleeping unit, a single-station smoke alarm shall be installed in the following locations:

1. In each sleeping room or each area directly outside the sleeping room.
2. On each floor level including the basement level. For sleeping units with split-levels and without an intervening door between the adjacent levels, a smoke alarm installed on the upper level shall suffice for the adjacent lower level provided that the lower level is less than 1 full story below the upper level.

The required equipment for smoke alarms shall consist of the following:

1. Installation. Smoke alarm devices shall be listed and installed in accordance with the provisions of this code, the manufacturers installation requirements, and the provisions of NFPA 72, which is adopted by reference in these rules. The standard is available for inspection at the Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth, Bureau of Construction Codes and Fire Safety, 2501 Woodlake Circle, Okemos, Michigan, 48864, or from NFPA, 1 Batterymarch Park, Quincy, MA, 02269-9101, at a cost as of the time of adoption of these amendatory rules of \$48.00.
2. Power Source. The equipment shall be operable by power from 1 of the following primary sources.
 - a. The building wiring provided that such wiring is served from a commercial source and is equipped with a battery backup. Wiring shall be permanent and without a disconnecting switch other than as required for overcurrent protection.
 - b. A non-rechargeable battery that is capable of operating the smoke alarm in the normal condition for a life of 5 years.

- c. A rechargeable battery, with proper charging, able to power the alarm for a life of 5 years and shall be automatically recharged by an AC circuit of the commercial light and power source.
 - d. A household or commercial use alarm system with battery backup listed and approved in accordance with the household and commercial fire warning equipment provisions of NFPA 72, as adopted by reference in this rule.
3. Audible Alarm Notification. The activation of the alarm signal shall produce a sound that is audible in all occupiable dwelling areas.
 4. Testing and Maintenance. The owner of a dwelling unit, in which required or optional fire detection or fire protection systems equipment is installed, shall be responsible for the proper operation, testing, and maintenance of the equipment in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions included with the equipment. The occupant of rental dwelling units shall be responsible for the periodic operational testing and periodic cleaning of the installed equipment within the rental unit in accordance with the testing instructions provided in the manufacturer's instructions for the equipment. If the system fails, breaks, or is out of service, it shall be repaired and functional within 30 days.

Exception: Smoke alarms and devices installed in buildings constructed before November 6, 1974 where an installation was approved by the appropriate enforcing agency under regulations in effect at the time of the installation shall be considered to comply with the provisions of the code.

The law may be reviewed at www.legislature.mi.gov by searching for MCL Section 125.1504c.

If you have any questions, please contact the Building Department at 586-731-5969.