

Development Fact Sheet 22 | Smoke Alarms

Smoke alarms are now required to be installed in new domestic dwellings and in many dwelling additions. A high percentage of deaths and injuries occur by fire in domestic dwellings, but there has never been a recorded death in South Australia where a home was protected by a functioning smoke alarm. The installation of smoke alarms is a lifesaving initiative designed primarily to awaken sleeping people and give them adequate warning to evacuate in the event of a fire.

There are three main types of domestic smoke alarms:

- Alarms powered by a 9 Volt battery;
- Alarms powered by connection to your household mains power supply, usually with a 9 Volt battery back-up power supply; and
- Alarms powered by a 10 year life non replaceable, non-removable, permanently connected battery.

All New Homes Must Have Smoke Alarms Installed

For houses built and occupied prior to February 1st 1998, the minimum requirement is an alarm powered by a 9 Volt battery. For houses purchased on or after February 1st 1998, the minimum requirement is an alarm connected to the mains power supply, or an alarm powered by a 10 year life battery. Alarms must be installed within six months of the transfer of title.

For houses built since January 1st 1995, the house should have been fitted with a smoke alarm connected to the mains power supply, with a 9 Volt battery back-up power supply.

Smoke alarms must comply with Australian Standard 3786, or be listed in the Scientific Services Laboratory (SSL) register of accredited products. Only those alarms stamped with the Standards Australia mark, or listed in the SSL register are considered adequate in design, performance and testing.

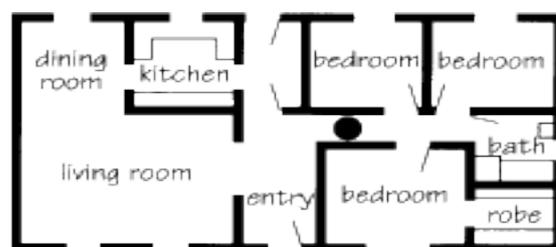
How many smoke alarms do I need?

The number of smoke alarms required in a building depends upon the design of the dwelling, including the number of storeys and layout of living and bedroom areas. Generally, smoke alarms are required to be located in areas separating the bedrooms from the remainder of the dwelling.

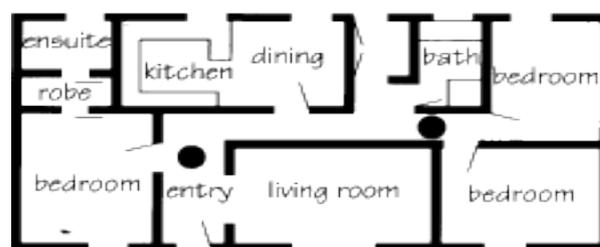
Where should I locate smoke alarms?

Smoke alarms are very sensitive and may detect smoke and moisture caused by household activities such as burnt toast or steam from a bathroom. To prevent false alarms, it is recommended that smoke alarms are not located near cooking appliances, in bathrooms or other damp or humid areas, or near hot water heaters, space heaters or fireplaces. Smoke alarms should be mounted on or near the ceiling, and must be connected to the mains electrical power supply, with a 9 Volt battery back-up.

Smoke Alarm Locations Examples



● smoke alarms needed

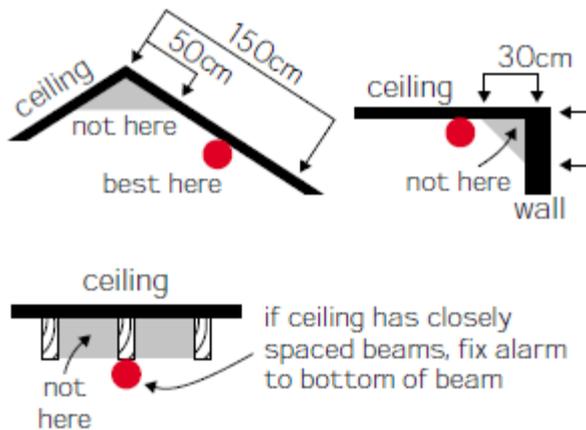


Position your alarms

- centrally in a passage
- if sloping ceiling no closer than 50cm and no further than 150cm from the apex as shown on the drawing below
- on the ceiling at the head of the stair to the top storey

- a minimum distance of:

- 30cm from a wall/ceiling junction – see the drawing below;
- 100cm from a fluorescent light;
- 30cm from other lights; and
- 100cm from ceiling fans or air-conditioning vents



Other requirements

Special types of alarms are available and must be considered for specific needs, for example, people with a hearing impairment, where detection is required in cooking areas etc. For smoke alarms to be effective they must be adequately maintained in accordance with the manufacturers recommendations, including cleaning, regular testing, and replacement of batteries.

The legislation applies to all homes including dwellings, home units, townhouses, flats etc.

The owner of a rental property is responsible for ensuring that smoke alarms are installed. This advice provides owners with some useful procedures for the effective maintenance of self-contained smoke alarms and must be considered in association with any other recommendations or instructions offered by the manufacturer of the smoke alarms.

The information provided in this Development Fact Sheet is intended as a general guide only and readers are encouraged to refer to the Norwood Payneham & St Peters (City) Development Plan and to seek professional planning advice if necessary. This information is subject to frequent updates and this version was last updated in June 2016. The latest version can be downloaded via the Council's website at www.npsp.sa.gov.au. For further information, please contact the Council's Urban Planning & Environment Department on 8366 4530.
