

Smoke alarms in rental properties

Working smoke alarms or detectors are compulsory in all rental homes. New smoke alarms must be photoelectric and have a long battery life, or be hard-wired.

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Smoke alarms must be installed:

- within 3 metres of each bedroom door, or in every room where a person sleeps
- in each level or story of a multi-story or multi-level home
- in all rental homes, boarding houses, rental caravans, and self-contained sleep-outs.

All new smoke alarms must:

- be photoelectric
- have a battery life of at least eight years, or be hard-wired
- installed according to the manufacturer's instructions
- meet international standards.

Existing smoke alarms do not need to be replaced if they are working, and have not passed the expiry date.

- [Smoke alarm technical requirements \[PDF, 1.5 MB\] \(http://www.tenancy.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/Tenancy/smoke-alarm-requirements.pdf\)](http://www.tenancy.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/Tenancy/smoke-alarm-requirements.pdf)
- [Smoke alarm best practice recommendations from Fire and Emergency New Zealand \(https://fireandemergency.nz/at-home/smoke-alarms\)](https://fireandemergency.nz/at-home/smoke-alarms)
- [Consumer NZ research showing which smoke alarms respond fastest \(https://www.consumer.org.nz/products/smoke-alarms-and-batteries/overview\)](https://www.consumer.org.nz/products/smoke-alarms-and-batteries/overview)

Landlords and tenants are responsible for maintaining smoke alarms

Landlords must ensure smoke alarms:

- are working at the start of each new tenancy
- remain in working order during the tenancy

Tenants must:

- not damage, remove, or disconnect a smoke alarm
- replace dead batteries during the tenancy if there are older-style smoke alarms with replaceable batteries
- let the landlord know if there are any problems with the smoke alarms as soon as possible.

Landlords can enter their rental home to comply with smoke alarm requirements. They must give 24 hours' notice and entry must be between 8am and 7pm.

If landlords don't meet their obligations, they could be fined up to \$4,000. If tenants don't meet their obligations they could be fined up to \$3,000.

Boarding houses

Landlords must replace expired batteries in the common areas of boarding houses like hallways and kitchens.

Tenants must replace expired batteries for smoke alarms installed in their rooms.

If there are problems with smoke alarms

If you're concerned about the smoke alarms in your rental home, talk to your landlord or tenant to try to solve the issue.

If you can't reach an agreement you can apply for mediation or a Tenancy Tribunal hearing.

[How to solve a problem \(http://www.tenancy.govt.nz/disputes/self-resolution/\)](http://www.tenancy.govt.nz/disputes/self-resolution/)

[Disputes process \(http://www.tenancy.govt.nz/disputes/\)](http://www.tenancy.govt.nz/disputes/)

These illustrations from New Zealand Standard NZS 4514:2009 show best practice for placing smoke alarms in homes depending on their different construction styles.