
STATE OF NEW JERSEY IMPLEMENTS NEW REGULATIONS REGARDING SMOKE ALARMS



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Effective January 1, 2019, all single-station, battery-operated smoke alarms must be of the 10-year sealed battery type. This requirement is applicable in all residential uses (R-1, R-2, R-3 and R-4) which include hotels, multiple family dwellings, rooming houses and one and two-family homes where single-station smoke alarms are required. This provision was adopted on January 9, 2018, with an effective date of January 1, 2019, giving property owners ample time to convert existing non-compliant units to the 10-year sealed battery type smoke alarms. Smoke alarms that are not of the sealed battery type may not be utilized after January 1, 2019.

This new requirement only applies to single-station smoke alarms. Existing alternating current (AC) interconnected hard-wired

smoke detection systems and low-voltage alarm systems are not affected by this requirement. Single-station carbon monoxide alarms are also not affected by this requirement. Combination single-station smoke and carbon monoxide alarms will need to be of the 10-year sealed battery type.

All units shall be maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions, inspected by the owner or the owner's representative whenever a change of occupancy occurs, and cleaned as necessary. Records of tests shall be kept on the premises and available for inspection.

The importance of working smoke alarms cannot be overstated. The material that common household items are made of today gives off toxic smoke and gases even in the early stages of a fire. It is extremely important to quickly detect a fire and provide early warning to the occupants to allow them to safely escape. The key to early detection is having a working smoke alarm.

After responding to a fire, firefighters are often frustrated to find that the smoke alarm that is present was not functioning and unable to provide the necessary warning to prevent injury or death. The most common cause of the smoke alarm not functioning was the lack of a working battery. Often, the battery was removed so it could be used somewhere else or the battery no longer had the necessary charge. Batteries were also removed to prevent nuisance alarms from cooking.

For this reason, the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs' Division of Fire Safety proposed and adopted regulations that require the use of 10-year sealed battery type smoke alarms. This technology prevents an individual from easily removing the battery, thus maintaining a working alarm. Most existing alarms have a 10-year life span. The 10-year sealed battery smoke alarms are designed to last 10 years and be replaced. Utilizing this new technology to ensure a working smoke alarm will help reduce preventable fire injuries and deaths.

Fire inspectors will be checking for the new alarms during routine inspections starting on January 1, 2019. Property owners will begin to receive violation notices where the 10-year sealed battery smoke alarms are not installed. Fire officials and property owners are encouraged to work together to establish a reasonable timetable for compliance.

If further information is needed please feel free to contact the New Jersey Division of Fire Safety at (609) 633-6106.

Louis Kilmer is the chief of the Bureau of Fire Code Enforcement in the New Jersey Division of Fire Safety. The Division of Fire Safety, which is part of the Department of Community Affairs serves as the state's central fire focus. Chief Kilmer has served with the Division for 32 years.