



STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE DEPARTMENT OF SAFETY

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Division of Fire Safety

Office of the State Fire Marshal

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SMOKE ALARM REQUIREMENTS

The New Hampshire State Fire Code has required electrically-powered detectors in multi-unit residential occupancies (apartments, rooming & boarding houses, bed & breakfast inns, dormitories, hotels, etc.), since 1999. The applicable code is NFPA 72

Multi family dwellings (new)

- 1 Requires interconnected AC electrically powered smoke alarms on every level in all common areas.
- 2 Requires interconnected AC electrically powered smoke alarms between the living area and sleeping area and in each bedroom.

Multi family dwellings (existing)

- 1 Requires interconnected AC electrically powered smoke alarms on every level in all common areas.
- 2 Requires interconnected AC electrically powered smoke alarms between the living area and sleeping area.
- 3 Recommend installation of smoke alarms in all sleeping areas

One and two family dwellings (new)(Includes all rented dwellings)

- 1 Requires interconnected AC electrically powered with battery backup smoke alarms on every level and in each bedroom.

One and two family dwellings (existing)

- 1 Requires interconnected smoke alarms, however there is an exception to allow the continued use of battery operated for existing owner occupied homes.

In all cases any smoke alarm within 20 feet to a kitchen appliance or within 3 feet of any bathroom shall be a photoelectric smoke alarm. The ionization smoke alarm in the vicinity of the cooking appliance or bathroom is the cause of numerous nuisance alarms.

Manufacturers have determined the lifespan of smoke alarms at 10years. Any alarm approaching 10years of age needs to be replaced

There has been a significant amount of discussion on the ionization vs. photoelectric smoke alarms. The issue that has been identified is that the photoelectric smoke alarm reacts quicker with a smoldering fire than ionization and the ionization smoke alarm reacts quicker than the photoelectric smoke alarm with a flaming fire. All smoke alarms have saved many lives. Although the codes do not require one or the other technology it is the recommendation of this office that both technologies be installed in all areas with the exception of the bathroom or kitchen area where only a photoelectric shall be installed.

If you require any assistance or additional information concerning this matter, please do not hesitate to contact this office.

References: RSA 153:10-a, RSA 153:11-a, Saf-C 6018, NFPA 72