

Interconnected mains powered smoke alarms are required in all new homes. State legislation also has requirements for existing residential buildings prior to their sale or before a new tenancy agreement is signed.

What is a compliant smoke alarm for an existing dwelling?

Compliant smoke alarms are:

- Alarms that comply with the Building Code of Australia (BCA) at the time of their installation, and
- Not more than 10 years old at the time of transfer of ownership or making the dwelling available for rent or hire
- In working order

New interconnection requirement

Smoke alarms are required to be interconnected where there is more than one alarm. However, interconnection of smoke alarms in existing buildings is not applicable if building approval was granted prior to 1 May 2015.

Where smoke alarms are installed at different times i.e. following additions to a dwelling, the provisions of the BCA applicable at the time of the last alarm necessary to meet requirements, apply.

What residential buildings require smoke alarms?

The Regulations apply to the following residential building classes:

Class 1a – A single dwelling being a detached house, or row houses, duplexes, town houses, terrace houses or villa units where attached dwellings are separated by a fire resisting wall.

Class 1b – Includes the following:

- Boarding houses, guest houses, hostels or the like in which not more than 12 people would ordinarily be resident and with a total area of all floors not exceeding 300m²
- Four or more single dwellings located on one allotment and used for short term holiday accommodation.

Class 2 – Dwellings such as apartments and flats in a building containing two or more units.

Class 4 – A residential unit in a non-residential building if it is the only dwelling in the building e.g. a caretaker's residence.

Are battery powered smoke alarms permitted?

The local government may approve battery powered smoke alarms in lieu of alarms attached to consumer power. A written application is to be made to the Shire for its consideration.

Are there penalties for non-compliance?

Yes, local governments have the power under the *Building Act 2011* and the Building Regulations 2012 to either issue an infringement notice or prosecute an owner who fails to have compliant smoke alarms installed prior to selling, transferring ownership, renting or hiring the dwelling. Penalty \$5000.

Please see the Department of Commerce for more information:

<https://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/publications/smoke-alarm-laws>

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