

# SMOKE ALARM MAINTENANCE AND REPLACEMENT

## Queensland Fire and Emergency Services' Recommendation

- **All residential accommodation be fitted with photoelectric type smoke alarms.**
- **Smoke alarms either hard-wired or powered by a 10-year lithium battery.**
- **Smoke alarms located -**
  - ☑ **on each level of living space;**
  - ☑ **outside each bedroom; and**
  - ☑ **in every bedroom**
- **All smoke alarms should be interconnected.**
- **Every home should have a practised escape plan.**

## MAINTENANCE

### How do I keep my smoke alarms working?

Smoke alarms can only save lives if they are well maintained and work properly.

Steps to remember:

- Read the manufacturer instructions.
- Once a month check the battery by pressing the test button. If you cannot reach the button easily, use a broom handle.
- Keep them clean. Dust and debris can interfere with their operation, so vacuum over and around your smoke alarm regularly.
- Replace the batteries at least once a year. Pick a memorable day (e.g. April Fool's Day, anniversary or your birthday) and replace the batteries each year on that day. In most models when batteries are low the detector will sound a short 'BEEP' every minute or so. This is your reminder to replace the battery.
- Smoke alarms powered by a 10-year lithium battery are tamper proof. Batteries cannot be replaced.
- Smoke alarms must never be painted.
- If cooking smoke sets off the alarm, do not disable it. Turn on the range fan, open a window or wave a towel near the alarm until the alarm stops beeping; or use the hush button (if fitted).
- Do not remove the batteries from your smoke alarm.
- All types of smoke alarms have a limited life-span. They should be replaced prior to the expiry date on the manufacturer's warranty.



For more information, relating to the maintenance responsibilities in rental properties, refer to the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services “[Wake up to photoelectric smoke alarms](#)” brochure.

## **REPLACEMENT**

### ***Why do I need to replace my smoke alarm?***

- Both hard-wired and battery operated smoke alarms are manufactured to have a recommended service life of at least 10 years under normal conditions of use (AS 3786).
- Smoke alarms with 10-year lithium batteries are tamper proof. The entire smoke alarm must be replaced after 10 years from the manufacture date.
- After 10 years smoke alarms may malfunction and their efficiency compromised with accumulated dust, insects, airborne contaminants and corrosion of the electrical circuitry.
- A smoke alarm constantly monitors the air 24 hours a day. At the end of 10 years, it has gone through millions of monitoring cycles. After so much use, components may become less reliable. This means that as the smoke alarm gets older, the potential of failure increases.
- Most smoke alarms have an expiry or replace by date stamped/printed on them.
- Contact the smoke alarm supplier for more detailed advice.

### ***How do I dispose of a smoke alarm I've replaced?***

Individual or small numbers of ionisation or photoelectric smoke alarms can be safely disposed of in household rubbish. The small amount of radioactive material in a domestic ionisation smoke alarm is insufficient to cause harm to people or the environment. Contact your local council for more information.

***Queensland Fire and Emergency Services recommend that all smoke alarms be replaced after 10 years.***