



Fact Sheet on: Smoke Alarms

Office of the Illinois State Fire Marshal

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What a Tenant or Landlord Needs to Know About the Smoke Detector Act for Multifamily Buildings

The Smoke Detector Act (425 ILCS 60/1) addresses the requirement for smoke alarms¹ in structures that (1) contain more than one dwelling unit, or (2) contain at least one dwelling unit and is a mixed-use structure, shall provide at least one approved smoke alarm:

- Installed within 15 feet of every room used for sleeping purposes
- Installed at the uppermost ceiling of each interior stairwell.

Smoke alarms shall be installed on the ceiling, at least 6-inches from the wall or on a wall located between 4 and 6 inches from the ceiling.

For dwelling units in existence on July 1, 1988 smoke alarms may be battery-powered or wired into the building's electrical system and need not be interconnected.

For dwelling units newly constructed, reconstructed, or substantially remodeled after December 31, 1987, the smoke alarms shall be permanently wired into the building's electrical system and if more than one smoke alarm is required, the smoke alarms shall be wired so that the initiation of one smoke alarm will initiate all the smoke alarms in the dwelling unit.

For any dwelling units newly constructed, reconstructed, or substantially remodeled after January 1, 2011 smoke alarms permanently wired into the building's electrical system must also maintain an alternative back-up power source, which may be either batteries or an emergency generator.

Tenant responsibility is to:

- Provide general maintenance for the smoke alarms within the tenant's dwelling rooming unit. It is recommended the batteries be tested weekly.
- Replace any required batteries in the smoke alarms found in the tenant's dwelling unit.
- Notify the owner or the authorized agent of the owner in writing of any deficiencies which the tenant is unable to correct.
- Provide the owner or the authorized agent of the owner with access to the dwelling unit to correct any deficiencies with the smoke alarm that have been reported.

Owner responsibility is to:

- Supply and install all required detectors and confirm the smoke alarm is functional at the time the tenant takes possession.

- **Make reasonable efforts to test and maintain detectors in common stairwells and hallways.**
- **Provide one set of written information regarding smoke alarm testing and maintenance per dwelling unit.**

¹For the purpose of this document in reflection of the Act; the terms “detector” and “alarm” are interchangeable and mean a device that senses smoke and produces a localized alarm.