



BIA Update 34 – 22 Jul 2004

Smoke Alarm Reminder

This BIA Update is a reminder that in April 2003 new regulations concerning the installation of automatic smoke detection and alarm systems in residential buildings came into effect.

All new houses and consented alterations are now required to have smoke alarms installed.

Whenever work is carried out on a dwelling that requires a building consent, the whole dwelling, not just the altered area, must be fitted out with smoke alarms.

The Acceptable Solution allows smoke alarms to be battery powered and not interconnected. However, they must have a 'hush' facility with a 60-second minimum duration. They should have a test facility (usually a button or switch) that is easily accessible.

Smoke alarms shall be listed or approved by a recognised authority as complying with at least one of: UL 217, ULC S531, AS 3786 and BS 5446 Part 1.

Where do I need to install smoke alarms?

Smoke alarms must be located on the escape routes on all levels within the house. Alarms must also be located in areas where people sleep, either:

- In every sleeping area
- Within 3 metres of every bedroom door. The alarms must be audible to sleeping occupants on the other side of the closed door.

Smoke alarms are to be installed on or near the ceiling, in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

How do I keep my smoke alarms in good working order?

Follow the manufacturer's maintenance advice. Generally, it is advised that on a monthly basis you should:

- Confirm that the alarm still works by pressing the test facility located on the outside of the device. Replace dead batteries immediately.
- Gently vacuum the dust that gathers on the device. Do not take the alarm apart or off its mount to do this.

Further information

If you have any questions about smoke alarm regulations please contact the Building Industry Authority on 0800 242 243 or (04) 471 0794.

Visit the New Zealand Fire Service website for a range of fire safety-related information: www.fire.org.nz