Maryland’s Updated Smoke Alarm Law

**When:** The new smoke alarm law went into effect January 1, 2018

**What:** The law requires the replacement of battery operated smoke alarms with sealed units that have a 10 year lithium-ion batteries and a silence/hush button feature.

**Why:** The smoke alarm law is a transition away from 9-volt battery-operated smoke alarms in an effort to achieve more reliable smoke alarm coverage in older dwellings

**Who:** Smoke alarms that are battery operated and presently exist by code or locations where there are no smoke alarms present must be replaced. Keep in mind it is never acceptable to remove required hard-wired smoke alarms and replace them with any type of battery-only operated devices.

**Also:** Maryland’s Smoke Alarm Law also requires the replacement of all smoke alarms 10 years after the manufacturer’s date on the back of the alarm. This applies to both hard-wired and battery operated smoke alarms. If the manufacturer’s date can’t be found, the alarm is most-likely outdated and needs to be replaced, see the example below



**FOR EXISTING HOMES**

Smoke alarm requirements for existing homes are based on when the home was constructed.  NFPA only requires smoke alarms outside each sleeping area and one on each level of the home. However, it also recommends that existing homes be equipped with at least the same number of smoke alarms required in new homes which includes smoke alarms present inside all sleeping rooms. The department’s position is consistent with the recommendation for new home construction.

**FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION**

New construction codes in Maryland have been updated and corresponds with the International Residential Code and NFPA 72, National Fire Alarm and Signaling Code. An AC powered, battery back-up smoke alarm is required in every bedroom, in the common area outside of the bedrooms and, on every other level of the dwelling unit. All required smoke alarms must be interconnected.

**NON EXPIRED 9-VOLT BATTERIES**

If the current 9-Volt Battery Only smoke alarm is within 10 years of the manufactured date the alarm does not need to be replaced.  Once the alarm is older than 10 years the alarm must be replaced with a 10-year sealed battery alarm.

**OFF-SITE MONITORED ALARMS**

Smoke alarms which are monitored by an off-site monitoring company are not affected by this law.

**DO YOU HAVE TO REPLACE A HARD-WIRE ALARM WITH A SEALED BATTERY?**

No, hard-wired alarms can be replaced with a 9-volt battery, however, it is recommended that you replace it with a 10-year sealed battery backup.

**HOMES CONSTRUCTED PRIOR TO JULY 1, 1975**

Battery operated smoke alarms must be replaced or upgraded with long life, sealed battery smoke alarms, equipped with a hush feature.

**HOMES CONSTRUCTED BETWEEN JULY 1, 1975 AND JUNE 30, 1990**

Smoke alarms should be replaced after 10 years of service and be AC powered with a battery back-up.

**HOMES CONSTRUCTED AFTER JANUARY 1, 1989**

Homes are required at least one hard-wired, AC powered smoke alarm on every level of the home, including the basement. It is also required that the units be interconnected. If one required smoke alarm is activated, it will result in the sounding of all required alarms.

IF YOU STILL HAVE QUESTIONS CONCERNING YOUR SMOKE ALARMS PLEASE CONTACT THE OFFICE OF THE STATE FIRE MARSHAL

410-653-8980

.