

SMOKE ALARM AGREEMENT

This agreement relates to the duties of Landlords and Tenants regarding smoke detectors.

It is the responsibility of the Landlord to ensure the proper operation of the smoke detector(s) upon the occupancy of each new Tenant and to periodically inspect smoke detector(s) and to document said inspections.

It is the responsibility of the tenant to test the smoke detector(s) monthly and to maintain the smoke detector(s) by keeping dust off of the unit(s) and to change batteries, in battery units, when necessary. It is also the responsibility of the tenant to notify the Landlord if the smoke detector(s) are not working properly.

Number of detectors _____ Apt. #. _____ Building _____
City and State _____

By signing this agreement, I agree to the above mentioned responsibilities.

Landlord's signature Date Tenants Signature Date

State laws now require every home and residential building to be protected by smoke detectors. Owners must install and maintain them and tenants must inform the owner of any detector problems. This document is intended to assist owners and tenants in understanding these requirements and to offer further recommendations. Additional detector requirements apply to group homes, high-rise buildings and health care facilities. There may also be additional local requirements. For further details, consult the applicable statutes and codes, your building inspection department or fire department. Failure to comply may subject the landlord to legal penalties.

Why are smoke detectors necessary?

Facts: In one year, 78 Wisconsin residents died in building fires. 76 of those were in residential fires. Most of them died at night; 31 of them were children. Most of these deaths were caused by smoke inhalation, not by burns. Hundreds more were seriously and painfully injured. Working smoke detectors have been shown to reduce your risk of death by fire by one-half. They also have the secondary effect of protecting your property.

What kind of detectors are required?

All detectors must be Underwriters Laboratories (UL) listed smoke detectors either of the ionization or photo-electric types. (Heat detectors, which respond slower, may only be used in addition to smoke detectors.) For multi-family housing (3 or more living units) built prior to January, 1982, and all one and two family dwellings, the detectors may be self-contained battery-operated smoke detectors. In newer multi-family housing, the detectors, except within living units must be permanently wired to an unswitched electrical circuit and interconnected with the fire alarm system.

It is recommended that all smoke detectors be interconnected and powered by both house current and batteries to ensure audible operation in all situations.

Where must they be installed?

For one and two family dwellings, the owner must install at least one smoke detector on each floor level of each unit, including the basement and any finished attic. It is recommended that they first be placed between each sleeping area and the rest of the house, and then near the base of any stairs or on other floor levels.

For multi-family housing, the owner must install at least one detector:

- In the basement
- At the head of open stairs at each floor level
- At the door leading to enclosed stairs at each floor level.
- Within six feet of each living unit's sleeping area, but not in the kitchen.
- In long hallways serving bedrooms, manufacturers usually require a detector every thirty feet.

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- If individual living units occupy several levels, it is recommended that detectors be placed on every floor level.
- It is also recommended that smoke detectors be installed in each bedroom if their doors are kept closed.

How should they be installed?

They should be installed per the manufacturer's instructions. Typical requirements for detectors include:

- If mounted on the ceiling, then at least four inches from the wall.
- If mounted on a wall, then between 4 to 12 inches from the ceiling. (There is usually a dead air space where the ceiling and wall meet.)
- Mounting within three feet away from any window, door or air register where drafts could prevent smoke from reaching the detector.
- Away from kitchens where cooking could cause false alarms and subsequent disconnection.
- It is recommended that smoke detectors with a temporary reduced-sensitivity switch be installed near kitchens.
- Smoke detectors should not be installed where subject to temperature extremes, excess humidity or heavy dust such as in bathrooms, unheated garages or attics.

What maintenance is required?

In one year's reported files, over one-third of the detectors in the same room as the fire origin, the smoke detectors did not operate. So it is required that they be maintained per the manufacturer's instructions which typically include:

- Changing any batteries at least once a year or more often if the low battery warning activates.
- Changing any bulbs when the trouble indicator activates.
- Testing the unit weekly by using the test button, or as required by the manufacturer. If it doesn't work, replace the battery. If it still doesn't work, then replace the detector with another until it can be repaired. Testing from a candle is the best method.
- Vacuuming the unit yearly.

If you have lost the detector instructions, there will be some basic information, including the manufacturer's address, on the detector itself.

Landlords must inform tenants in writing that they are responsible for informing their landlords in writing of any smoke detector problems in their apartment. The landlord should correct the problem promptly.

It is recommended that you replace batteries on a set date each year, such as your birthday, lease renewal date, or National Fire Prevention Week each October, and then mark the battery with its installation date.

It is recommended that tamper-resistant detectors, or preferably, house current powered detectors be installed if there is a problem with battery removal or disconnection.

Is there any thing else?

Yes, although functional smoke detectors will usually give you early warning, it's still up to you to have an adequate escape plan. You should have at least two ways to escape a fire and an outside meeting location for everyone in your household. Then contact the fire department. Also, smoke detectors are not a replacement for fire prevention. Look at your property for sources of fires and eliminate or reduce them.

So tonight, check your home's smoke detectors. And then sleep easier.

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